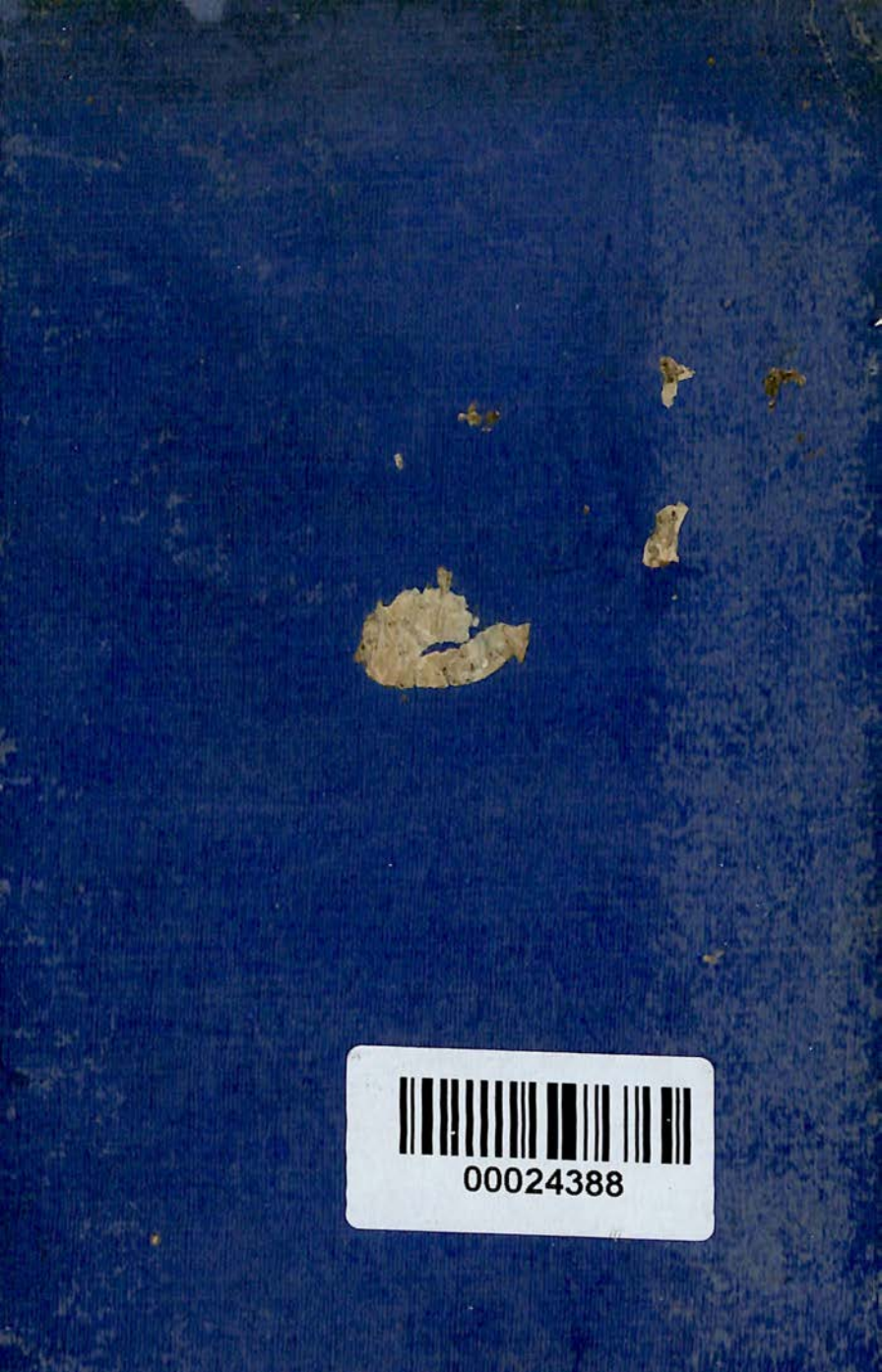
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SOUVENIRS

OF

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Madame Vigée Le Brun.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON,
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SOUVENIRS

OF

MADAME VIGÉE LE BRUN.

CHAPTER I.

I leave Vienna—Prague—The Churches—Buda—Dresden—Promenades—The Gallery—Raffaelle—Fortress of Königsberg—Berlin—Reinsberg—Prince Henry of Prussia.

AFTER having remained in Vienna for two years and a half, I left it on Sunday the 19th of April, 1795, on my way to Prague, where I arrived the 23rd of April, by a lovely road.

What first attracted my attention on entering the capital of Bohemia, was the

bridge across the Elbe. The bridge is very fine and has twenty-four arches.

I commenced by visiting the churches. In that of St Thomas, I greatly admired a fine picture of Rubens, of the Martyrdom of St Thomas; then one of Caravaggio, which though very dark, has fine details.

The cathedral is a noble structure, and encloses the tombs of three emperors, also a chapel of silver, in which lie the remains of Saint Népomicène; besides this, the iron coat of mail belonging to the Saint is held as a precious relic in this church, and crowds go there to kiss it.

I only remained one day at Prague; desiring to reach Dresden as quickly as possible. On our way we passed through Buda, which, though beautifully situated is almost a deserted town.

Dresden is a pretty town, well built, but at this epoch was very badly paved. The environs of Dresden are charming, principally the Plaone, where there is a splendid view; but unfortunately all these fine places are infected by the odour of tobacco. It is there, that

principally on Sundays, the *bourgeois* make their parties of pleasure, taking their dinner, and as soon as their repast is finished they begin to smoke, which spoils, to my mind, these delicious promenades.

The day after my arrival I went to visit the magnificent gallery of pictures, which having been so often described, I will only mention that I was lost in admiration of the masterpieces of painting it contains. The Elector did me the honour to ask me to exhibit my "Sybil" in this gallery, and for a week it was visited by the whole Court. I went on the first day, in order to show the Elector how touched and gratified I felt for this high favour, which I was far from expecting or meriting.

We visited the famous fortress of Königsberg, and my daughter formed one of the party. There is such a deep well there, that on throwing down a stone it takes thirty seconds to reach the bottom. The view from this fortress is of immense extent.

From Dresden I went straight on to

Berlin, where I remained only five days, for my intention was to remain there a short time on my way back from Russia, in order to see the charming Queen of Prussia.

I left Berlin on the 28th of May, 1795, for Reinsberg, situated about sixty miles from the capital, and the residence of Prince Henri. I found there, to my great delight, the Marquise de Sabran, and the Chevalier de Boufflers. It was owing to a letter from this amiable woman, addressed to me at Berlin, in which she told me that Prince Henri would never forgive my leaving for Russia without first paying him a visit, which decided me on taking this short journey. I had every reason to believe that Madame de Sabran had spoken the truth, when I saw the Prince hasten to the carriage to welcome me. Though I was still in my travelling dress, he insisted on at once presenting me to his family, without giving me time to make a little change in my toilette. I fancied that the ladies seemed rather astonished; but the kind Prince made all

the excuses, and took upon himself all the blame.

The château is finely situated and divided into two parts, of which the Ferdinand family inhabited the largest. The following day Prince Henri took me for a walk in the park, which is very large and fine. For love of the brave warriors who fought with him in the Seven Years' War, the Prince had erected an enormous pyramid on which all their names were inscribed. But what touched me most, was the sight of a column, at the base of which are verses in honour of the devotion and generous death of Malesherbes!*

* Chrétien-Guillaume de Malesherbes born at Paris 1724, and died, guillotined in the same city, 1794. Malesherbes was a great magistrate, a just minister, an heroic advocate, a faithful friend, a voluntary and sublime victim. Not having as defender of the king been able to save his august client, Malesherbes would not defend himself before the revolutionary tribunal, and was condemned to death for having conspired against the unity of the French Republic. Malesherbes was conducted to the scaffold at the same time as his daughter and her husband. His foot having hit against a stone in crossing the Palais

The Comtesse de Sabran, her son, and the Chevalier de Boufflers were established at Reinsberg; they remained there long after my departure. The Prince had given them some land, and the Chevalier had commenced cultivating it. In this lonely place I led the most agreeable and delightful life possible.

I cannot express how sorry I was to leave this excellent Prince, whom alas! I never saw again, and whom I shall regret all my life.

In leaving Reinsberg we took the road by Königsberg. The little towns we traversed were very well built, and most of the country fertile. At last I arrived at Riga, and there I remained several days to rest, and to await our passports for St Petersburg.

de Justice, he said to his companion: "This is what may be called a bad omen; a Roman in my place would have returned to his own home."

CHAPTER II.

Peterhoff—Saint Petersburg—Comte Esterhazy—Czarskoiesiolo—Grand-Duchess Elisabeth, wife of Alexander—Catherine II.—Comte Strogonoff—Kaminostroff—Hospitable character of the Russians.

I REACHED St. Petersburg the 25th July, 1795, by the Peterhof road, which gave me a favourable impression of the city; for the road is bordered on each side by charming country-houses, surrounded by gardens in the English style. The inhabitants have done the best with their ground, which is very marshy, by ornamenting it with kiosques and little bridges over the canals, which

traverse them. It is unfortunate that every evening the most frightful humidity sets in, which entirely destroys the pleasing aspect of the place; even before sunset there arises such a fog on this road, that one imagines oneself enveloped in a thick black smoke.

I was enchanted with the magnificence of this city, its movements, its fine hotels and large streets of which one, the Nevski Prospect, is three miles in length. The beautiful Neva, so clear and limpid, traverses the city, laden with vessels which go and come unceasingly. The quays of the Neva are of granite, as are also many canals that Catherine has had dug in the interior of the city. On one side of the river are superb monuments, that of the Academy of Arts, the Academy of Science, and many others, which are reflected in the Neva. In fact, St. Petersburg transported me to the time of Agamemnon, as much for the grandeur of its monuments, as for the costume of its people, which recalls that of ancient times.

In the month of July, when I arrived, there was scarcely one hour of night; the sun sets at about half-past ten in the evening; the reflection lasts till twilight sets in about half an hour after midnight, to such a degree that I have often had supper at eleven o'clock by daylight.

The fatigue I had undergone in my journey from Riga had been so great, I was obliged to rest at once on my arrival. I was far from feeling rested when, after having been in St. Petersburg only twenty-four hours, Prince Esterhazy was announced. He came to congratulate me on my arrival in St. Petersburg, told me that he should at once inform the Empress of it, and at the same time arrange for my presentation at Court. Immediately afterwards, I received a visit from the Comte de Choiseul Gouffier. In conversation with him, I expressed the pleasure it would give me to see this great Catherine; but I did not hide from him the fear and nervousness I should feel when presented to such a *puissante* princess. "Re-

assure yourself," he replied, "when you see the Empress, you will be astonished at her simplicity and good-nature; for," he added, "she is really a good woman."

I confess that this expression surprised me; I could scarcely credit its truth, after what I had heard others say of her. It is true the Prince de Ligne had charmed us with the narration of his journey in the Crimea, he had related so many anecdotes of this Princess, which proved her to have as much grace as simplicity in her manners; but a *good woman*, one must own was not the correct term to apply to her.

However that might be, that very evening M. d'Esterhazy, on returning from Czarskoiesiolo, where the Empress was residing, came to announce that Her Majesty would receive me the following day at one o'clock. Such a prompt presentation, which I had not at all expected, threw me into extreme embarrassment; I had only some very plain muslin dresses, never wearing anything else in general, and it was impossible to have a handsome dress made by the fol-

lowing day even at St. Petersburg. Prince Esterhazy had told me that he should come to take me at ten o'clock precisely to breakfast with his wife, who lived at Czarskoiesiolo, so that when he arrived at the appointed time, I left in a very unhappy state of mind as regarded my toilette, which was certainly not a court toilette.

On arriving at Madame d'Esterhazy's, I noticed at once her astonishment. Her good-natured politeness could not prevent her saying: "Madame, have you not brought another dress?" I became crimson at this question, and explained how I had not had the time to procure a more suitable dress. Her dissatisfied air redoubled my anxiety to such an extent, that I had to screw up all my courage against the moment of my presentation to the Empress.

M. d'Esterhazy gave me his arm, and we crossed a portion of the park, when, at a window on the ground floor, I perceived a young person watering a pot of carnations. She looked about seventeen at the utmost; her features were fine and regular, and a

perfect oval, her complexion was lovely, of a pallor quite in harmony with her face of angelic sweetness. She wore a white loose robe, fastened by a sash worn loosely round her waist, which was small and supple as a young nymph's. Such as I have described her, this young person stepped forward so gracefully, that I cried out: "She is Psyche!" It was the Princess Elizabeth, wife of Alexander. She at once addressed me, and kept me sufficiently long enough to say a thousand gracious things, then she added: "We have long been wanting to see you here, Madame, so much so that I even dreamt you had arrived." I left her with regret, and I have always remembered the lovely apparition.

Tremblingly I arrived at the palace, and a few moments afterwards was *tête-à-tête* with the autocrat of all the Russias. M. d'Esterhazy had informed me that I must kiss her hand, and in consequence of this custom, she had taken off one of her gloves, which ought to have reminded me of it; but I entirely forgot it. It is true that the

appearance of this celebrated woman made such an impression on me, that it was impossible to think of anything else but looking at her. I was at first extremely surprised to find her very short; I had fancied her prodigiously tall, as high as her grandeur. She was very stout, but had still a handsome face, beautifully set off by her white curly hair. Genius seemed seated on her high white forehead. Her eyes were soft and sweet, her nose quite Grecian, her complexion florid, and her features very animated.

She at once said in a voice of much sweetness: "I am charmed to see you here, Madame; your reputation has preceded you. I greatly love the arts; and above all painting. I am not a connoisseur, only an amateur."

Everything she said during this interview, which was rather long, was the hope that I should be so well pleased with Russia, that I should remain in the country some time, and her whole conversation showed so much true benevolence, that my timidity disappeared, and when I took leave of Her

Majesty I was entirely reassured. Only I could not forgive myself for having forgotten to kiss her beautiful white hand, and I was still more vexed because M. d'Esterhazy reproached me for it. As for my dress, she did not appear to have paid the least attention to it, and perhaps she was less scrupulous than our ambassadress. I went over a portion of the gardens of Czarskoiesielo which are quite fairy like. The Empress had a sort of terrace which communicated with her apartments, on which she kept a quantity of birds; they told me she went herself to feed them, and it was one of her greatest pleasures.

Shortly after my reception, Her Majesty expressed her intention of allowing me to pass the summer in this beautiful country place. She ordered her Controllers of the Household to give me apartments in the château, desiring to have me near her in order to see me paint. But I have since heard that these gentlemen did not wish to see me placed so near the Empress; and notwithstanding reiterated orders they per-

sisted in saying that there were no available rooms to be had. What much surprised me was hearing that these courtiers, believing me to be of the party of the Comte d'Artois, feared that through my influence I might succeed in replacing M. d'Esterhazy by another ambassador. It is highly probable that M. d'Esterhazy was quite aware of their proceedings; but he knew me very little not to understand that I was far too occupied with my painting, to give my time to political matters.

The welcome which I received in Russia was sufficiently good to console me for a petty court intrigue. My letters of introduction became quite useless to me; not only was I invited to pass my life in the best and most agreeable houses, but I met again at Saint Petersburg, many old friends and acquaintances. First of all the Comte Strogonoff, a true lover of the arts, whose portrait I first took in Paris, when I was very young. We met again with the greatest pleasure. He possessed, at St. Petersburg, a splendid collection of pictures,

and near the city, at Raminostroff, a charming Italian casino, where every Sunday he gave great dinner parties. I was enchanted with the place, the windows of the casino overlook the Neva. The garden, which appeared of great extent, was laid out in the English manner. Quantities of boats arrived from all quarters bringing people either to dine at Comte Strogonoff's or simply to walk in his garden.

On the day I was there, about three o'clock, we all assembled in a covered terrace, open at each side, on one side lay the park, and on the other the Neva. It was the most perfect weather; for summer is exquisite in Russia, though often in July I have found it hotter than Italy. We dined on this terrace, the dinner was magnificent; as soon as we were seated at table, a company of musicians played delightfully during the whole of dinner.

The house of Comte Strogonoff was far from being the only one of like magnificence. At St. Petersburg, as at Moscow, numbers of the nobility possessing colossal fortunes,

prided themselves on keeping an open table, so that any well recommended stranger had never occasion to dine at a restaurant. I recollect that towards the end of my stay at St. Petersburg, Prince Narischkin, grand equerry, kept an open table of twenty-five to thirty places every day for visitors who had brought letters of introduction.

This hospitality exists also in the interior of Russia, where modern civilisation has not hitherto penetrated.

CHAPTER III.

Comte Cobentzel—Princesse Dolgorouki—Tableaux Vivants—Potemkin—Madame de With—I am robbed—Doyen—M. de L——.

I PROFITED by the remainder of the fine weather to visit a little of the country around Saint Petersburg; for summer finishes in Russia in the month of August, and there is no autumn. I often walked in the Park of Czarskoiesiolo, which is very fine and bordered by the sea; it is full of monuments that the Empress calls her *caprices*. One sees a superb marble bridge in the style of the Palladio; Turkish baths, trophies of the victories of Romazoff and Orloff; a temple with thirty-two

columns, then the colonnade, and grand staircase of Hercules.

Comte Cobentzel wished me much to make the acquaintance of a woman whose cleverness and beauty I had heard greatly praised, the Princesse Dolgorouki. I received an invitation to dine with her at her country-house Alexandrowski, and the Comte came to escort me there with my daughter. This large house was very poorly furnished; the river flowed at the bottom of the garden, and it delighted me to see the continual passage of boats in which the rowers always sang. Their songs are all melodious and sad.

The beauty of Princesse Dolgorouki struck me. Her features were of the Grecian mixed with the Jewish type, particularly the profile. Her long chesnut hair fell over her shoulders; her figure was admirable, and her whole bearing expressed grace and nobility without the least affectation. She received me with so much amiability and distinction, that I at once accepted her invitation to pass a week with her. The

amiable Princesse Kourakin, with whom I then made acquaintance, was residing with the Princesse Dolgorouki, and these two ladies with Comte Cobentzel kept house together. The other guests were very numerous, and no one thought of anything but amusing themselves. After dinner we used to go in elegant boats on the river; musicians in another boat preceded us. The evening of my arrival we had a delightful concert, and the day after, theatricals. They performed the *Souterrain* by Dalayrac. The Princesse Dolgorouki took the part of Camille; young Ribaussière, (who has since been made minister in Russia), the part of the child; and Comte Cobentzel, the gardener. I remember that during the performance a courrier arrived from Vienna with despatches for the Comte, who was Austrian Ambassador to Saint Petersburg, and at the sight of a man, dressed as a gardener, he refused to give him the despatches, which raised a most amusing discussion.

The little theatre was charming, and I profited by it to arrange some *tableaux*. I

chose my personnages from the handsomest men and the most beautiful women who visited us, and I draped them in cashmere shawls of which we had an abundance. I chose serious or Bible subjects, in preference to any other. These *tableaux-vivants* greatly amused the company.

At the end of a week, which appeared like a moment, I bade adieu to the amiable Princess; for I had made so many engagements for portraits, I could not, to my regret, stay any longer.

Comte de Cobentzel was passionately in love with the Princesse Dolgorouki, without her returning it the very least; but the indifference with which she received his attention, did not cause the least diminution in them, and as the old song says, he preferred her frowns to the favours of any other women. He was her slave in everything. Comte de Cobentzel appeared about fifty years of age, was very ugly and squinted horribly. He was tall, but very fat, which did not prevent his being very active, es-

pecially when he executed the orders of his well-beloved Princess.

What made the Princesse Dolgorouki so indifferent to the attentions of M. de Cobentzel and many other adorers, was that she was accustomed to the worship of men still higher in rank and intellect. The famous Potemkin,* who desired that the word *impossible* should be erased from the dictionary, had loved her passionately, and the magnificence with which he showed his love, was such as one reads of in the "Arabian Nights." In 1791, after his journey in the Crimea, the Empress Catherine II. returned to Saint Petersburg, Prince Potemkin remained commander-in-chief of the army, where most of the Generals had brought their wives. It was then that he became acquainted with the Princesse Dolgorouki. She was called Catherine, and her fête day having arrived, the Prince gave a grand dinner, said to be in honour of the

* Grégoire Alexandrovitch, Prince Potemkin, the most known favourite of the Empress Catherine II., was born in 1736 near Smolensko, and died at Nicolaief in 1791.

Empress. He had placed the Princesse by his side. At dessert, crystal cups filled with diamonds were served to the ladies in spoonsful. The queen of the feast appeared to remark this magnificence; Potemkin whispered to her in a low voice: "Since it is you that I fête, how can you be astonished at anything!" He spared nothing in order to satisfy a desire or a caprice of this adored woman. Having heard that she had no shoes for a ball, owing to her always getting them from France, Potemkin immediately despatched a courier to Paris, who by travelling day and night, brought her the shoes. One circumstance, well known by everyone at St. Petersburg, is, that to afford the Princesse a spectacle which she had expressed a wish to see, he gave orders for the assault on the fortress of Otshakoff sooner than was agreed upon, and perhaps sooner than was prudent.

When I arrived at Saint Petersburg Prince Potemkin had been dead some years, but they spoke of him still as a sort of enchanter. One may form an idea of the

extraordinary power and grandeur of his imagination, in reading the accounts written by the Prince de Ligne and Comte de Ségur, on the journey made by the Empress Catherine II. in the Crimea. The palaces, the wooden villages built on the road, as by a fairy's wand; the immense forest he burnt to give Her Majesty a real firework exhibition—all this journey, in fact, is truly fantastic and characteristic of the man. His niece, the Comtesse Scawronski, told me at Vienna: "If my uncle had known you, he would have overwhelmed you with riches and honour." It is certain that this celebrated man, showed himself generous to a fault, and foolishly magnificent; and though possessing a fortune which exceeded many sovereigns, the Prince de Ligne told me he was frequently short of money.

The favour and power bestowed on him by the Empress had accustomed Prince Potemkin to satisfy his slightest wish. A story is told of him which proves this undoubtedly. Some one speaking before him one day of the height of one of his

aides-de-camp," said that an officer whom he named, in the Russian Army, was even taller. Those present who knew the officer, contested the point, Potemkin immediately sent off an express with the order to bring back the gentleman in question, who was then about 2,400 miles off. When the officer heard that he was sent for by the Prince, his joy was extreme; for he felt assured he was going to be appointed to a superior grade. One can therefore imagine his disappointment, when on his arrival at the camp, he learnt that it was only that he might be measured against the aide-de-camp of Potemkin, and that he was expected to return at once without any other result than the fatigue of a very long journey.

The man who had so very long remained first favourite, and who had, as it were, reigned by the side of his sovereign, could not survive the thought of a disgrace. When he learnt that the new favourite, young Platon Zouboff,* appeared to have gained entire

* Platon Zouboff, Lieutenant in the Horse Guards of the Empress of Russia, became in 1791 the last favourite

ascendency over the mind of the Empress, Potemkin at once decided on leaving the army, and flew to St Petersburg. In the meanwhile, Catherine II. had sent Prince Repnin to replace him in the command of the army, with orders to treat for peace, to which Potemkin had always been opposed. Irritated to the last degree on hearing this, he hastened on in the hope of stopping the final signature; but at Yassy, he learnt that peace was concluded. This news was fatal; having been for some time ailing, he became dangerously ill, which did not prevent his continuing his journey to St Petersburg.

of Catherine II. Soon afterwards he was made Grand Master of Artillery, Chevalier of the Order of St. Andrew and created Prince. Disgraced under Paul I., all his papers were seized, and he was deprived of all his posts. Recalled again to Court by the influence of Comte Pahlen, Governor-General of St. Petersburg, Platon Zouboff became, with his protector, chief of the conspiracy against the life of Paul I. He was the cruelest and most bitter of the Emperor's assassins. It was he who strangled the unfortunate prince with his scarf. Nicholas and Valerian Zouboff, his brothers, had also a large share in the conspiracy and assassination.

His malady made such progress, that he was unable after a few hours to endure the motion of the carriage; they laid him down in a field and covered him with cloaks, and there, Potemkin breathed his last, the 15th of October, 1791, in the arms of the Comtesse Branicka, his niece. I have never forgotten a speech the old Princesse Galitzin made to me one day when speaking of the death of this celebrated man: "Alas, my dear, this great Prince, who had so many diamonds and so much wealth, died on the grass."

Princesse Dolgorouki was not the only beauty with whom the Prince fell in love. One, a charming Pole whom he adored, went by the name of Madame de With, she afterwards married M. de Potocki. For her, too, he displayed a gallantry of the most *recherché* kind. Amongst other traits of his magnificence, he devised a *fête*, and invited two hundred ladies; after the dinner, there was a lottery from which each lady gained a splendid cashmere, and by this means he was enabled to give the finest and costliest

shawl into the hands of the lovely Madame de With. Some years after this epoch, I met Madame de With in Paris, she was then as young and pretty looking as it is possible to be, but rather vain of her charming face.

As regards my monetary affairs, the first days of my stay in Russia were by no means happy ones for me. One may form an idea by the copy of a letter I wrote to my sister-in-law, Madame Vigée, six weeks after my arrival.

"St. Petersburg, September 10, 1795.

"I must now, dear Suzette, put you *au courant* of all my cares and tribulations. I am installed in an apartment which suits me very well, as it has a very good studio; but it is very damp, the house only having been built three years, and not having been previously inhabited, which makes me foresee a move before the end of summer. This inconvenience is unfortunately not the only one. Amongst others, an event has

occurred which has given me a great deal of trouble.

"Shortly after my arrival, I was invited to spend the evening at the house of the Princesse Mentschikoff, where there were charming private theatricals. On returning home about one in the morning, I found Madame Charot, my daughter's governess, standing on the staircase looking terrified and very pale: 'Ah! Madame,' she cried, 'you have just been robbed of all your money!' You may imagine what a shock this gave me. Then she told me that my German servant had been the culprit; that they had found on his person and in his bed packets of my gold; that he had even thrown some down the staircase, in order that the Russian servant might also be accused. At last he had been taken away by the police, who after counting the money had taken it away as proof of the delinquency. I at once told Madame Charot that she had been very wrong to let them take away my pieces of gold, and I was very right; for, now that the affair is finished, they have

given me back the number of my pieces, but not their value. I had dappios and quadruples of Vienna, for which they gave me bad ducats, so that I lost 15,000 francs. But what made me more miserable still was that, according to the law of the country, this unfortunate boy was condemned to be hanged. He is son of the *concierge* of the Convent of Caltemberg, which the Prince de Ligne lent me as a residence when at Vienna. The man and his wife are the most honest people in the world, they took the greatest care of me, and I could not bear the idea of seeing their son hanged. I went to the Governor and implored him to save the miserable young man, and to let him go away quietly. Comte Samoieloff would not listen to my request, saying that the Empress had been informed of the robbery, and was incensed at it. I cannot tell you what it cost me in time and trouble to obtain the assurance at last that he should be sent away to sea, which was done.

"To return to my 15,000 francs, I regret it

all the more because I have since lost 45,000 elsewhere. This is how, during the first month of my stay here, I had earned 15,000 roubles, a rouble is worth three francs; I was advised to place this money with a banker who was held in great esteem. This estimable person became a bankrupt, and I never saw any more of my 45,000 francs. Hitherto it has been impossible for me to put by anything of what I have saved; I await with resignation a more fortunate time.

"To change the subject, I must again tell you that I have again met my old friend, Doyen, the painter, who is so good and kind; the Empress likes him much. She came to his assistance; for he emigrated without any fortune, having only left in France a country-house, which was taken from him. He has his place at the theatre, close to the Empress' box, who, I hear, often talks with him.

"I have also had the pleasure of again meeting the Baronne de Strogonoff, of whom I saw so much at Vienna, where I made the

portraits of herself and husband, I had a little adventure at her house, which I must tell you, as it will make you laugh. One day at Vienna, whilst Madame de Strogonoff was having a sitting, she spoke to me about a Greek supper, which you will recollect I mentioned to you at the time; she added she knew that this supper had cost me 60,000 francs. I gave quite a jump off my seat on hearing this, and I speedily told her all about it, and I proved to her that I had only spent about fifteen francs. 'You astonish me,' she replied; 'for at St. Petersburg we heard of it from one of your own countrymen, Monsieur de L——, who said he was very intimate with you, and that he had been one of your guests.' I replied what was true, that I only knew M. de L—— by name, and the subject dropped.

"A few days after my arrival in St. Petersburg, which certainly M. de L—— never supposed me to be even likely to visit, the Baronne de Strogonoff was ailing, and I went to see her; as I was

seated at the side of her bed, M. de L—— was announced. Quick, I hid myself behind the curtains, and the gentleman entered, the Baronne said to him—

"'Well! you will be glad to hear that Madame Le Brun has arrived?'

"Then for fun she began to draw him out on the subject of his acquaintance with me, and the Greek supper. The man commenced to stammer, and the Baronne still asked more questions, till at last I came forward and went up to him. 'Monsieur,' I said, 'you are very intimate then with Madame Le Brun?' He was obliged to say, 'Yes.' 'This is very strange,' I replied, 'for Monsieur, I am Madame Le Brun, her whom you have calumniated, and I meet you to-day for the first time in my life.' At these words his limbs quite shook under him. He took his hat and went away, and has not since been seen; for at the best houses he has been shown the door.

"One sad thing I have to remark very frequently, that in a strange country the French alone are capable of traducing their

country people, even to the point of calumny. Everywhere, on the contrary, one sees the English, the Germans, and the Italians, upholding and mutually supporting each other.

"Adieu, my good Suzette, I embrace and love thee with all my heart. My love to my brother also, and to thy dear little girl, who is so pretty and interesting."

CHAPTER IV.

I paint the two young Grand-Duchesses, daughters of Paul —Platon Zouboff—The Grand-Duchess Elizabeth—The Grand-Duchess Anne, wife of Constantine—Madame Narischkin—A Court Ball—A Gala—Dinners at St. Petersburg.

AS I had predicted, it was not long before I moved into other apartments, which were situated on the grand square of the Imperial Palace. When the Empress returned to the city, I used to watch her every morning throw pieces of bread to hundreds of crows, who each day at a certain hour came to seek their pittance. In the evenings I could see her at about ten

o'clock, when her rooms were lighted up, playing at hide and seek and other games with her grandchildren and other people of the Court.

As soon as Her Majesty had returned to St. Petersburg from Czarskoiesiolo, the Comte Strogonoff brought me an order from her to paint the two Grand-Duchesses Alexandrine and Hélène. These princesses were about thirteen and fourteen years of age, and their countenances were really lovely, though with totally different expressions. Their complexion was so fine and delicate, you would have thought that they lived on ambrosia. The eldest, Alexandrine, was of the Grecian type; but Hélène's face expressed much more refinement. I grouped them together, holding and looking at a portrait of the Empress; the costume was slightly Greek, but very simple and modest. I was therefore greatly surprised when Zouboff, the favourite, told me that Her Majesty was scandalised at the manner I had dressed the two Grand-Duchesses in my picture. I so entirely believed this un-

kind remark, that I speedily replaced my tunics by the dresses the princesses ordinarily wore, and covered their arms with long sleeves. The truth is that the Empress had said nothing of the kind; for she had the goodness to assure me of this the very next time I saw her. I had none the less spoilt the arrangement of my picture, without counting that their pretty arms, which I had painted in my best manner, were no longer seen. I remember that Paul, when Emperor, reproached me one day for having changed the costume that I had at first given to his daughters. I told him at once how it had occurred, on which he shrugged his shoulders and said: "It was a trick played on you." I may add that it was not the only one, for Zouboff did not like me. His malevolence towards me was proved on another occasion in the following manner. Crowds came to my rooms to see the portraits of the Grand-Duchesses and my other works. As I did not wish to lose all my mornings, I had fixed Sunday morning to open my studio, as I had always done in

the countries I had visited. My rooms faced the palace; the carriages of all those who came to make their court to the Empress, had only to turn to arrive at once at my door. Zouboff who could not imagine apparently that crowds could care to visit a painter, merely for the sake of seeing her paintings, said one day to Her Majesty: "Do you see, Madame, they go also to pay their court to Madame Le Brun; it is surely assignations that they make at her house." Happily for me these insinuations had no effect on the elevated mind of the Empress, neither did she take notice of the perfidy of her favourite; but the Prince de Nassau, who heard the remark, came at once to inform me of it, he was so indignant.

Why Zouboff did not like me, I have never rightly been able to guess. He was, I know, the protector of Lampi, a skilful portrait painter, who was established at St. Petersburg; but Lampi was always very good to me. The day after my arrival, he called and invited me to dinner. I remember that the dinner was quite

recherché, and that during the repast, we were treated to an excellent selection of music. Though I have been assured that I excited the jealousy of Lampi, I have since learnt to the contrary, that he praised my works, and said he could not do as well.

It is possible that the favourite was ill-disposed towards me, because I had seemed to neglect his patronage. Zouboff liked people to ask for his support; but pride has always made me fear that people might attribute to protection the success I desired to obtain; whether right or wrong, I wished to owe my reputation and fortune to my palette. Zouboff must have found it difficult to understand my mode of proceeding, since he had a whole Court at his feet. Intoxicated by the favour which became more and more marked, I am told he often treated the ministers and nobles with extreme insolence. From early morning, the greatest personages of the Court waited in the anti-chambers the moment that his door was opened; for he had a *lever*, like Louis XIV, after which they

retired, happy to have assisted at the toilette of Platon Zouboff, above all if he had honoured them with a smile.

As soon as I had finished the portraits of the Grand-Duchesses, the Empress commanded me to take that of the Grand-Duchess Elizabeth, recently married to Alexander. I have already said what an enchanting person this Princess was; I should have preferred to have painted her according to my imagination, instead of in the ordinary costume of the day; but since this was not to be, I painted her full length, in court dress, arranging flowers in a basket. I went to her for the sitting and was shown into her divan, a name given to immense *salons* surrounded by a large divan; this *salon* was hung in pale blue velvet, edged with silver fringe. The Grand-Duchess speedily appeared, dressed in a white robe, such as she wore the first time I saw her; it was still Psyche, and her manner so sweet, so gracious, joined to her charming face, made me admire her doubly.

When I had finished her large portrait,

she made me take another for her mother, in which I painted her with a transparent violet shawl, leaning against a cushion. I can say that the more I saw of her, the more I found her manner kind and loveable. One morning, when she was giving me a sitting, a sudden giddiness seized me, my eyes seemed to be full of sparks; she became much alarmed, and ran herself to fetch me water, and bathed my eyes, caring for me with the greatest solicitude, and on my return home sent at once to inquire how I was.

I also at the same time made the portrait of the Grand-Duchess Anne, wife of the Grand-Duke Constantine. She was a Princess of Coburg, and though not possessing such a heavenly face as that of her sister-in-law, was not less lovely and bewitching. She might have been sixteen years of age, and the liveliest gaiety reigned in all her features. This Princess, however, had not known much happiness in Russia.

If we may say that Alexander took after

his mother by his beauty and character, we know that it was not thus with Constantine, who resembled his father, without being as ugly, and who also, like him, had a fearful temper. It is true that sometimes Constantine showed much kindness and goodness of disposition; when he loved, he loved well; but with the exception of those persons who had found the road to his heart, his rages and violence rendered him terrible to all who approached him. Amongst different singular stories told of him, it is said, that on the evening of his wedding-day, at the moment of retiring to his wife, he went into a horrible rage against a soldier of the guard who had not paid sufficient attention to his countersign. This scene was prolonged in such an extraordinary manner, that all the people of the Court, who accompanied him, could not conceive how he could remain such a long time ill-treating a soldier on duty, instead of going at once to the young and lovely woman he had that morning married. Shortly after his marriage, he became very jealous of his brother Alexander, which

created violent quarrels between himself and the Duchess Anne, who was indignant at his suspicions. These differences got to such a point, that it resulted at last in a divorce. The Princess returned at first to her parents, but later on, when I was in Switzerland, I found her settled there.

There is every reason to believe, that the Grand-Duchess Elizabeth, that angel of beauty, was not more happy than her sister-in-law, in retaining the heart of her husband. The love of Alexander for a charming Pole whom he married to Prince Narischkin, is known to all Europe. I saw Madame Narischkin, when very young, at the Court of St Petersburg. She and her sister arrived there after the death of their father, who was killed in the last war with Poland. The eldest of the two might have been sixteen years of age. They were quite lovely; they danced with the most perfect grace, and soon one made the conquest of Alexander, and the other that of Constantine. Madame Narischkin was the

most regularly beautiful; her figure was fine and supple, her face was purely Greek, which made her extremely remarkable; but she had not to my mind the exquisite charm of the Grand-Duchess Elizabeth.

At this period the Court of Russia was composed of such a great number of charming women, that a ball at the Empress's was a beautiful sight. I was present at one that she gave. The Empress, splendidly dressed, was seated at the end of the reception room, surrounded by the chief persons of the Court. Near her stood the Grand-Duchess Marie, Paul, Alexander who were superb, and Constantine, all standing. An open balustrade separated them from the dancers.

The dance was simply a *polonaise*, which I took part in with the young Prince Bariatinski, so as to make a tour of the ball-room, after which I seated myself on a raised form so as to have a better view of the dancers. It would be impossible to mention how many pretty women passed before me; but the beauty of the Imperial Family surpassed all others. The four

Grand-Duchesses' were dressed *à la grecque*, with tunics that fastened on the shoulders with large diamoud buckles. I had arranged the toilette of the Grand-Duchess Elizabeth, so that her costume was the most correct; Paul's two daughters, Hélène and Alexandrine, wore veils of clear blue gauze spotted with silver, which had a fairy-like appearance.

The magnificence of the Empress's surroundings, the richness of the room, the number of beautiful persons, the profusion of diamonds, with the light of a thousand candles, had a magical effect.

A few days after this ball, I went to a dinner party at Court. When I entered the dining-hall, the guests were already assembled awaiting the arrival of the Empress. Large folding doors were thrown open and she appeared. I have said that she was short, but on days of ceremony her majestic walk and eagle glance gave her the appearance of height, and to me she seemed the queen of the world; she wore the grand cordons of three orders, and her costume

was simple and noble; it consisted of a muslin tunic, embroidered in gold, with a girdle of diamonds. Above the tunic she wore a crimson velvet dolman, with short sleeves. The cap, which seemed a frame to her white hair, was not trimmed with ribbon, but with diamonds of great beauty.

When Her Majesty was seated, all the ladies seated themselves, and each placed their napkins over their knees. The Empress fastened hers with pins, similar to a child. She soon perceived that the ladies ate nothing, and said to them: "Mesdames, you will not follow my example, you only make a pretence of eating. For myself, I always take the precaution of fastening my napkin under my chin, for otherwise I should not be able to eat an egg without throwing it all over my collar."

I saw, in fact, that she made a very good dinner. A beautiful selection of music was played during the repast. The musicians were placed at the end of the hall under a canopy. I love to hear music during dinner, and the only thing that has ever made me

wish to be a very great lady, or very rich, is the desire to hear music at those times. I prefer it to all the conversation of the people with whom one dines, notwithstanding as the Abbé Delille says "that often morsels gossiped over, cause them to digest much better."

Talking of dinners, I must not omit to say that the dullest one I partook of at St. Petersburg, took place at the house of Zouboff's sister, to whom I had so long neglected to present my letter of introduction. Six months had passed after my arrival in Russia, when I met her one evening on leaving the theatre. She came up to me and said in a most amiable manner, that she was always expecting to receive a letter that had been given to me for her. Not knowing what excuse to make, I replied that I had lost it; but that I would search for it again, and would send it her at once. She invited me to dine with her, and having accepted her invitation, I went to her house. The dinner hour at St. Petersburg at all houses is from two to half-past; my daughter accompanied

me. We were shown into a gloomy room, without my being able to discover any signs of dinner. One o'clock, two o'clock passed, still nothing appeared, at last two servants entered and arranged some card tables, and though it seemed strange that people should eat in a drawing-room, I flattered myself we should soon be served; but not at all, the servants left the room, and shortly afterwards, guests arrived and at once sat down to cards. Towards six o'clock, my poor child and myself became so famished that on looking at ourselves in the glass we were really pitiable objects. I felt as though I was dying, and it was only at half-past seven that dinner was announced; but our poor stomachs had suffered too much, it was impossible to eat. I learnt afterwards that the Comtesse D——— was intimately acquainted with Lord Wilford, and dined to please him at the hour they dine in London. The Comtesse ought to have told me this; but perhaps the sister of the favourite felt persuaded that all the world knew the hour when she sat down to table.

In general, nothing annoyed me more than dining out; I was, nevertheless, sometimes obliged to do so, above all in Russia, as I should have given much offence if I had invariably refused. The greatest magnificence presided at these repasts; the cooks were nearly always French, and the fare exquisite. A quarter of an hour before dinner, a servant always brought in a tray of liqueurs, and slices of thin bread and butter. No one takes liqueur after dinner; but always excellent Malaga.

It is the custom that noble ladies, even in their own houses, go in to table before the guests they have invited, so that frequently the Princesse Dolgorouki and others would take my arm in order to make me go in with them; for it is impossible to be more polite than Russian ladies. I may almost go so far as to say they are devoid of that pride which is the reproach of so many of our French ladies.

CHAPTER V.

The Cold at St. Petersburg—The Russian People—Gentleness of their Manners—Their Probity and Intelligence—Comte Golovin—The Melting of the Ice on the Neva—Salons of St. Petersburg—The Theatre—Madame Hus — Mandini — Comtesse Strogonoff — Princesse Dolgo Kourakin.

IF one stayed in doors all day, no one would know that winter had arrived, to such a perfection have the Russians carried the art of heating their apartments. From the hall door, every part is heated by the most excellent stoves, so that the open fires kept up are merely a luxury. The staircases and the corridors are of the same temperature as the rooms where

the doors remain open as in summer. It is said that when the Emperor Paul, then Grand-Duke, visited France, under the name of the Prince du Nord, he said to the Parisians: "At St. Petersburg we see the cold, but here we feel it." Also, when I had passed seven years in Russia and had returned to Paris, where I found the Princesse Dolgorouki, I recollect one day we felt so dreadfully cold sitting close to a fire, that we said: "We must go and spend a winter in Russia to get warm."

In going into the open air so many precautions are taken, that even strangers scarcely feel the severity of the climate. Every one wears in their carriages large velvet boots, lined with fur, and cloaks also thickly wadded and made of fur. At seventeen degrees Reaumur, the theatres are closed, and everyone remains at home. I was, I believe, the only one, perhaps, who, not understanding the danger, went one day, when the thermometer stood at eighteen degrees, to call on the Comtesse Golovin. She lived at some little distance from me,

in the fine street, the Nevski Prospect, and from my house till I reached hers, I did not meet a single carriage, which greatly surprised me. The cold was such that at first I thought the carriage windows must be open. When the Comtesse saw me enter her *salon*, she exclaimed: "*Mon Dieu!* how could you have come out on such an evening? do you not know that the thermometer is nearly twenty degrees?" At these words I thought of my poor coachman, and without taking off my pelisse, I ran away from the Comtesse and quickly returned to my own house. But my head had been seized by the cold to such a degree that I was quite giddy. They rubbed me with Eau de Cologne to warm me, otherwise I should have gone mad.

One most surprising circumstance is the very slight impression the rigorous temperature has on the lower classes. Far from their health suffering, I find it is in Russia that the greater number of centenarians exist. At St. Petersburg, as at Moscow, the great nobles and all the notables of the

empire travel with from six to eight horses; their postillions are small boys between eight and ten years of age, who guide them with an address and dexterity really remarkable. Two of these boys are employed for eight horses, and it is very curious to see these little urchins dressed very lightly, and sometimes with their shirts open on their chests, remain gaily exposed to a cold that would certainly kill a French or Prussian Grenadier. I contented myself with two horses to my carriage, and was often astonished at the gentleness and resignation of the coachman; never did I hear a word of complaint. In the most severe weather, when these men have to wait for their masters at the theatre or the ball, they remain there without moving, only you see them sometimes, beating their hands and feet to warm them, whilst the little postillions stretch themselves at the bottom of the staircase. I must, however, say that the coachmen are all provided with warm gloves and coats, and when the cold exceeds a certain degree, if any noble wishes to give a ball or reception, he dis-

tributes amongst the men strong drinks, and wood for bivouac fires in the courts and the street.

The Russian people are as a rule ugly; but they have a straightforward honest bearing, and are the best people in the world. You never meet a drunken man, though their habitual drink is the strongest brandy. The greater number of the Russians live on potatoes and garlic mixed with oil, and they smell of it, notwithstanding that they bathe every Saturday. This poor food does not prevent them singing at the top of their voices, whilst working or rowing their boats.

The Russians are skilful and intelligent, for they learn all sorts of handicraft, with amazing facility; many even obtain success in the arts. One day at the Comte Strogonoff's I met a young man, his architect, who had once been his serf; this man had shown so much talent that the Comte presented him to the Emperor Paul, who made him one of his architects, and ordered him to build a theatre from the

plans he had made and submitted to him. I did not see the theatre finished, but I am told it was very fine.

The domestics are remarkable for their intelligence. I had one who did not know a word of French, and I did not know a word of Russian; but we understood each other perfectly without the help of speech. I could ask for anything by raising my hand, and he was never at a loss, and served me admirably. Another precious quality that I discovered in him, was a thoroughly conscientious fidelity; I was frequently paid for my pictures in bank notes, and when I was occupied in painting, I would place them by me on the table. On leaving my work, I constantly forgot to take them away, and they remained often three or four days there, without my losing one. His sobriety was wonderful, I never on any occasion saw him intoxicated. This good servant was called Peter; he wept when I left St. Petersburg, and I have always regretted him. The Russian people are in general very honest

and gentle. At St. Petersburg and Moscow, I never heard of a great crime, or even of a theft. This honest and peaceful conduct is surprising in men who are still not far from being barbarians, and many people attribute it to the state of serfdom which exists in Russia; for my own part I attribute their honesty and other good qualities to their being extremely religious. Shortly after my arrival in St. Petersburg I went to visit the daughter-in-law of my old friend, the Comte Strogonoff. Her house at Kaminostroff was situated to the right of the great road which borders the Neva. I left my carriage at a little wicker gate which opened on to the garden, through which I passed to reach the drawing-room on the ground floor, the door of which I found wide open. It was very easy therefore to enter the house of the Comtesse Strogonoff; so when I found her in a small boudoir and she showed me her own apartments, I was surprised to see all her diamonds lying exposed on a table close to the window which opened on to the garden, and was conse-

quently close to the high road. This appeared all the more imprudent, because the Russian ladies are in the habit of spreading their diamonds and other jewellery under glass cases, as it is seen in jewellers' shops. "Madame," I said, "are you not afraid of being robbed?" "No," she replied, "here are my best police," and she pointed out, placed above the jewellery, several images of the Virgin, and Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of Russia, before which burnt a lamp. It is a fact, that during the seven years I passed in Russia, I have always noticed that on all occasions the image of the Virgin, or of a saint, and the presence of a child, has always been held sacred by a Russian.

The lower class, in addressing you, invariably call you according to your age, as "mother, father, brother, or sister," and this does not even except the Emperor or Empress, and all the Imperial family.

Among the middle class of Russians, many are very well off. The merchants' wives for example spend a great deal on their toilette,

without its appearing to cause any stint in their households. Many of the farmers also are very rich. I recollect that one day on arriving for dinner at the Comte Golovin's, I found in the *salon* a tall stout man, who had all the appearance of a well-to-do peasant. When dinner was announced, I saw this man sit down with us, which struck me as being so extraordinary, that I asked the Comtesse in a low voice who he was. "He is my husband's farmer," she said, "who has come to lend him sixty thousand roubles, so that we may settle some of our debts; the kindness of this good farmer is decidedly worthy of the dinner we give him." Nothing was more natural, in fact; but that which ought to have appeared less so, was that the Comte Golovin, with the large fortune he had inherited, should be in need of funds and obliged to borrow from his own farmer; but I had already observed how extravagantly Russian nobles spend their money; to say truth, they are infinitely more magnificent than the French. The consequence of this extraordinary luxury (to which our own

cannot be at all compared) is, that if you wish to be paid, you must apply to them just before the 1st of January and the 1st of July, the time when they receive their rents; otherwise you run the risk of finding them without money. As long as I was in ignorance of this custom, I often had to wait for the payment of the portraits I had made. Comte Golovin was one of the best creatures in the world, but he had no management. The Comtesse Golovin was a charming woman, full of wit and talent. She drew very well, and composed pretty songs, which she sang accompanying herself at the piano. Besides all this, she was *au courant* of all the literary news of Europe, which I believe was known to her before it even reached Paris. Her most intimate friend, the Comtesse Tolstoï, was both beautiful and good, but was much less animated than the Comtesse Golovin; and perhaps the contrast in their characters had formed and cemented their intimacy.

When the month of May arrives at St. Petersburg, one hears nothing of spring

flowers, or the song of the nightingale, so much vaunted by poets. The ground is covered with melting snow; the Neva is filled with enormous rocks of ice heaped on each other, and these icebergs bring back the cold which begins to lessen after the melting of the Neva. The breaking up of the ice on this river may be called a beautiful but horrible sight, the noise of it is frightful; for near the Bourse, the Neva is three times the width of the Seine at the Pont-Royal; the effect produced by this sea of ice breaking up in all parts may therefore be imagined. In spite of the soldiers on guard that are stationed the whole length of the quays to prevent people from jumping from block to block, the rash ones would constantly venture on the moving ice to gain the opposite bank. Before undertaking this dangerous crossing, they make the sign of the cross, and spring on to the ice, being quite convinced that if they perished they were fated to do so. During the breaking up of the ice, the first who crosses the Neva in a boat presents a silver cup to the

Emperor, who returns it to him filled with gold.

The windows of the houses at this period still remain hermetically closed, for Russia has no spring, but vegetation hastens to regain lost time. You may almost say you see the leaves growing. I went one day with my daughter to walk in the summer garden, it was in the month of May; and wishing to assure myself that all that had been said of the rapidity of the vegetation was true, we particularly remarked the arbutus leaves which were still in bud. We made one tour of the garden, then having returned to the place we had left, we found the buds open and the leaves entirely spread.

The Russians make the best of their severe climate, and during the period of the greatest cold, have sledging parties, sometimes by day, and sometimes at night with torches.

One of the finest ceremonies that it is possible to witness, is the benediction of the Neva. It takes place every year, and

the Archimandrite gives the benediction in the presence of the Emperor, the Imperial Family, and all the great dignitaries of the State. As at this period the ice on the Neva is at the least three feet thick, a large hole is dug in it, out of which after the ceremony is over, every one stoops to touch the Holy Water. Frequently you see women dip their young children into this icy bath; sometimes these unhappy women let these poor little victims of superstition slip into the water; but then, instead of weeping the loss of their child, the mother congratulates herself on the happiness of the angel who has gone to pray for her. The Emperor is obliged to drink the first glass of water, which the Archimandrite presents to him.

I have already said that in order to judge of the cold at St Petersburg, one must go into the streets. The Russians are not content with giving their apartments the temperature of spring, but their windows are crowded with the loveliest flowers, which we only see in the month of May. In winter the apartments are lighted in the

most profuse manner. They are perfumed with warm vinegar, into which is thrown branches of mint, which gives a very agreeable and wholesome odour. All the rooms are surrounded by long and large divans, on which both men and women establish themselves. I became so accustomed to this manner of sitting, that I could not feel comfortable on a chair.

The Russian ladies bow their heads in salutation, which appears to me much more graceful than our curtseys. They do not ring for their servants, but call them by clapping their hands together, as the Sultanas are said to do in the seraglios. Every Russian lady has a man in livery, who remains always at the door to open it to visitors. But what appeared most strange to me, was that some of the ladies had a female slave to sleep under their beds.

Every evening I went out. Not only the balls, concerts, theatres, were frequent, but I delighted in the evening parties, where I found all the urbanity and grace of French

society; for to use an expression of the Princesse Dolgorouki, it appeared as though good taste had bounded from Paris to St. Petersburg. The houses regularly open to visitors were numerous, and in all of them I was received in the most amiable manner. People met about eight o'clock, and supper was at ten. In the interval I had tea; but the tea in Russia is so excellent that, though I could not drink it myself, I was scented with its perfume.

Two houses extremely sought, were those of the Princesse Michael Galitzin, who had frequently visited Paris, where she married one of her daughters to a Frenchman, M. le Comte de Caumont, and the Princesse Dolgorouki; there existed a sort of rivalry between these ladies relative to their *soirées*. The first, less beautiful than the Princesse Dolgorouki, was prettier. She was very witty, but fantastic to excess. She would look annoyed with you all at once, and without cause, then a moment afterwards would say the most amiable and flattering things. The Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier

was so madly in love with her, that her caprices and eccentric humour only seemed to augment his passion. It was curious to witness the bow down to the ground with which he greeted the Princesse, whenever they met; this was at that time the mark of respect shown to any lady, whom the gentlemen did not wish to compromise.

The suppers at the Princesse Dolgorouki's were charming; one met there the corps diplomatique, and all the most distinguished foreigners; everyone in fact delighted to go there, the mistress of the house was so amiable. She always kept me a seat in her box at the theatre.

No woman, I believe, had ever more dignity in her person and manners than the Princesse Dolgorouki; as she had seen my "Sybil," which she greatly praised, she begged me to take her portrait in that character, and I had the pleasure of giving her entire satisfaction. When the portrait was completed, she sent me a very handsome carriage, and put on my arm a bracelet, made of a tress of hair, on which diamonds

were arranged in such a manner that one read: *Ornez celle qui orne son siècle.* I was extremely touched at the grace and delicacy of such a present.

I frequently met Comte Strogonoff, with his son and daughter-in-law. She was young, pretty, and clever. Her husband, who at the most was twenty-five years of age, was a delightful man. An actress from Paris turned his head. The Comtesse perceived his infidelity, and as she loved him much she suffered greatly, but never spoke on the subject to him. The young Comte kept this actress, Mademoiselle Lachassaigne, in the greatest luxury; she had a child, and he at once gave her a pension of six thousand roubles. During the war with France he was killed; but the young Comtesse still continued the pension to the actress. This action appears to me so noble and good that further eulogium would be unnecessary.

The good kind Princesse Kourakin did not entertain much; but one met her every evening in society, principally at the house

of the Princesse Dolgorouki, where it was a happiness to meet her. It was impossible to see her twice without loving her. Her genial nature and goodness of disposition were such, that I used to call her a child of seven years; she charmed everyone, and gained all hearts; I do not wish anyone to imagine that the tender friendship I felt for her caused me to exaggerate by flattery her memory. Princesse Kourakin came to Paris, where she remained a long while; Madame de Bawr, M. de Sabran, M. Briffaut knew her and were her friends; they could say if my sorrow for her loss blinded me, and if society did not lose in her one of its brightest ornaments.

CHAPTER VI.

The Lake of Pergola—Island of Krestowski—My Letter to Cléry, valet to Louis XVI.—His Answer—I paint a portrait of Marie Antoinette for the Duchesse d'Angoulême.

A GREAT delight it was to me, when after having for months inhaled the icy air out of doors or that heated from within by stoves, I at last saw the spring arrive. Walking became a pleasure, and I hastened to visit the lovely environs of St. Petersburg. I often went to the Lake of Pergola with my faithful Russian servant, to take what I called a fresh air bath.

I amused myself with contemplating its

pure and limpid waters which reflected like a mirror the surrounding trees. My good Peter prepared my little dinner meanwhile, or else gathered a bouquet of wild flowers which he afterwards presented to me; I involuntarily thought of Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday.

The heat being excessive, I often walked very early with my daughter on the Island of Krestowski. The heat at St. Petersburg is often very intense. I remember once during the month of July, I forget in what year, finding the Princesse Bariatinski seated in her cellar with her lady companion, who was on one of the lowest steps reading aloud. But to return to the Island of Krestowski, as we were boating we met numbers of men and women bathing promiscuously. We even saw in the distance some rude young men on horseback, who were thus bathing both themselves and their horses. In any other country such indecent behaviour would not have been permitted; but it is not the same in one where perfect innocence reigns. None thought of evil, for the Russians are

really most ingenuous. In their families, during the winter, the husband, wife, and children all sleep together round their stove, and if that is not large enough they lie stretched out on benches, covered only by their sheep-skins. They have preserved the customs of the ancient Patriarchs.

During one summer I hired a small house on the banks of the Neva; the following one young Count Strogonoff lent me a charming house at Kaminostroff, where I enjoyed myself immensely. Every morning I walked in the neighbouring forest and spent my evenings with the Comtesse Golovin, who was living near. I met the young Prince Bariatinski, Princesse Tarente, and many other amiable people at her house. We talked or read aloud till supper; in fact, my time passed most agreeably.

The peace and happiness I enjoyed did not prevent my thinking very often of France and her troubles. I was always pursued by the thought of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, so that my greatest desire was to execute a painting representing them in one

of the solemn and touching moments which preceded their death. I have already stated that I had studiously avoided any knowledge of the details which led to their sad fate, but afterwards I had to hear them to create any interest thereby. I knew that Cléry had taken refuge in Vienna, after the death of his illustrious master; I wrote and informed him of my intentions, begging him to help me in carrying them out. Shortly after I received the following letter* which I have always preserved, and copy word for word here:

"Madame,

"The great knowledge you possess of the personnages composing the august family of Louis XVI. made me say to Madame la Comtesse de Rombeck, that none but you could depict the heartbreaking scenes borne by this unhappy family in the course of its captivity. Such interesting details deserve to descend to posterity, and the brush of

* M. J. Tripier le Franc is now possessor of this very precious document.

Madame Le Brun can alone reproduce them faithfully.

"Amongst these painful scenes, six might be taken for paintings:

"1st. Louis XVI. in prison, surrounded by his family, giving lessons in geography and reading to his children; the Queen and Madame Elizabeth meanwhile are employed in sewing and mending their clothes.

"2nd. The separation of the King and his son on the 11th of December.

"3rd. Louis XVI. being interrogated in the tower by four members of the Convention, and surrounded by his counsel: MM. de Malesherbes, de Sèze, and Tronchet.

"4th. The executive counsel informing the King of his sentence to death, Gronvelle reading aloud the sentence.

"5th. The King saying farewell to his family, the eve of his death.

"6th. His departure from the tower to the place of torture.

"The one of these scenes which most affects people is the parting. An engraving was made on this subject in England; but

it is not at all truthful, either in the resemblances to the people or in the locality.

"I shall endeavour, Madame, to give you the necessary details so that you may be able to sketch this picture. The room where this scene passed might be fifteen feet square. The walls are covered with paper representing square stones, which are most suitable for a prison. On the right, near the entrance-door is a large window, and as the walls of the tower are nine feet thick, the window is in a recess of about eight feet long, which diminishes towards the end, where there are some thick iron bars. In the rear of this window is a china stove two feet and a half broad and about three feet high; the tube passes under the window and is fixed to the left part of the recess near the commencement. From the window to the front wall is about eight feet. On this wall and near the stove is a swinging lamp which lit up the whole room, for the scene passed at night, that is at ten in the evening. The front wall might be fifteen feet wide; a folding door divided it placed

more to the left than to the right. This door was painted grey; one of the sides ought to be left open to allow of the interior of the bed-room being seen. The left portion of the room has a glass partition with glass doors either side; behind this partition is a small room where they all dined. It is in this room that the King sat surrounded by his family and told them of his last wishes. It was on leaving this little dining-room that the King advanced towards the entrance door as though to lead them away, and thus ought this scene to be taken; it was at the same time the most painful moment for all of them.

"The King was standing, holding the Queen by the right hand, who could barely keep upright; she leaned on his right shoulder, the Dauphin was on the same side entwined in the arm of the Queen, who pressed him to her side; he held with his little hands the left one of the Queen, and the King's right hand, kissing them and bathing them with tears. Madame Elisabeth

is on the King's left, holding in her two hands the upper part of the King's arm, lifting her eyes, filled with tears, to the skies. Madame Royale is in front holding the left hand of the King, and making the room resound with her mournful wails. The King, always calm, always stately, never shed a tear, but he seemed to be cruelly affected by the sad condition of his family. He said to them in his softest tones, but full of touching expressions: 'I do not bid you good-bye, rest assured I will see you again to-morrow morning at seven o'clock?' 'You promise,' said the Queen, half audibly. 'Yes, I promise,' replied the King; 'adieu.' At this moment the sobs redoubled, Madame Royale fell fainting at the King's feet, which she held in a firm embrace. Madame Elisabeth tried to support her. The King made a violent effort, and tearing himself from their arms, returned to his room. As I was near Madame Elisabeth, I helped this Princess to support Madame Royale for a few steps; but I was not permitted to go

any farther, and I went back to the King. During this scene, four municipal officers, of whom two were very badly dressed, with their hats on, stood in the window recess, warming themselves by the stove without any apparent emotion. They were decorated with a tricolour riband and a cocade in the middle.

"The King was dressed in a brown coat with a collar, a white piqué vest, grey casimir trowsers and grey silk stockings with gold buckles, very plain ones on his shoes, a muslin collar, the hair rather powdered, a few stray locks, the back hair tied together *en catogan.*

"The Queen, Madame Royale, and Madame Elisabeth, were dressed in white muslin with very simple linen fichus, and caps of the same material in the shape called *baigneuses*, edged with a little lace, an handkerchief trimmed also with a little lace, tied above the cap in a three cornered shape.

"The young Prince wore a greenish grey casimir, a culotte or trowser of the same, a small white waistcoat, the coat made low

and turned back; the shirt collar plain and falling over that of the coat, the frill being of plaited linen; black shoes fastened with black ribbons; blonde hair without powder, falling carelessly on the shoulders, in curls on the forehead, drawn back in a plait behind, the front hair being allowed to fall where it willed.

"The Queen's hair was nearly white, that of Madame of a lovely blond, Madame Elisabeth's, blond also, but a shade darker. There, Madame, are nearly all the details I can give you on the subject; if they do not suffice, deign to ask me what other questions you like and I will endeavour to reply to them. I only ask of you one thing, which is, that these details may remain private. As I have notes where all these facts are written down, I should not wish them to be known before they are printed. I hope some day you will come and inhabit this town, and if you care to make more paintings on these sad subjects, I shall be happy to make myself agreeable in any

way. I pray you to accept Madame my respectful homages.

"Your very humble and obedient servant,

"CLÉRY."

"Vienna, 27th of October, 1796."

This letter* made such a painful impression on me, that I felt it to be impossible to undertake a work, when each stroke of the brush would have made me burst into tears. I therefore renounced my intentions; but had the happiness, during my sojourn in Russia, of retracing once more the august and beloved features of her I knew so well; it was on this occasion.

The Comte de Cossé arrived at St Petersburg from Mittau, where he had left the Royal Family. He paid me a visit and begged me to go and see the Princes

* The notes of which Cléry speaks in his letter, were published by him under the title of: "Journal de ce qui s'est passé dans la Tour du Temple pendant la Captivité de Louis XVI;" this pamphlet appeared in London for the first time in 1798. Cléry was born at Versailles and in 1809 died at Itzig, in Austria.

who he said would receive me with pleasure. I felt very grieved at the time to be unable to do so, but my daughter being ill I could not leave her, and besides I had other engagements to fulfil, not only with people of note but with the Imperial Family, for several portraits, which would not permit of my leaving St Petersburg for some time. I explained all my perplexities to M. de Cossé, and as he did not leave at once to return, I made from memory the Queen's portrait, which I begged him to transmit to Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême, until I could go myself and receive the orders of Her Royal Highness.

This gift procured for me the pleasure of receiving from Madame the following letter, which I preserve as a token of her satisfaction.

"Mittau, 15th of April, 1800.

"The Comte de Cossé has placed in my hands, Madame, the portrait of my mother which you charged him to bring me. You have procured for me the double satisfaction

of seeing in one of your most beautiful works an image dear to my heart. You can therefore judge of the gratitude I feel towards you for having employed your rare talents in giving me this proof of your sentiments, and rest assured that I feel all the more affected because I cannot explain to you as I wish my deep feeling. You may always count, Madame, on my sentiments regarding yourself.

"MARIE THÉRÈSE."

As soon as I was free again I hastened to Mittau, but unfortunately found that the Royal Family had left.

CHAPTER VII.

Catherine—The King of Sweden—The Masked Ball—Death of Catherine—Her Funeral.

THE people lived so happily during the reign of Catherine, that I can positively affirm having heard her blest by both small and great, as one to whom the nation owed so much of its glory and well-being. I shall not write about the conquests which flattered the nation's pride so prodigiously, but of the real and lasting good done by this Sovereign to her people.

During the space of thirty-four years, the time she reigned, her benevolent genius created or protected all that was useful and

glorious. In memory of Peter I., she built an imperishable monument of two hundred and thirty-seven stone towns, saying that the wooden villages, which were so easily destroyed by fire, cost her much more. She covered the sea by her fleet; established everywhere manufactories and banks, so essential to the commerce of St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Tobolsk. She accorded new privileges to the Academy; founded schools in all the towns and country districts; built canals and raised granite quays; formed a new code of laws; created an establishment for foundlings; in fact, she introduced in her Empire the blessing of vaccination, which her powerful will alone was capable of imposing on the Russian people, and the better to obtain this result she was inoculated first herself.

All these beneficent actions are due to Catherine alone, for she never gave any real authority to others; she dictated herself the despatches to her ministers, who were in reality, only her secretaries. It is told of her that Lady Bruce, who had long been her

intimate friend, said one day: "I notice that your Majesty's favourites are very young."

"I desire them to be so," she replied: "if they were older, people would say they governed me."

Zouboff, who was the last, was not more than twenty-two at the outside. He was tall, thin, well made, with regular features. I saw him for the first time at a court ball, giving his arm to the Empress and walking with her. He wore at his button-hole, her portrait, set with superb diamonds, and she appeared to treat him most kindly; nevertheless, all agreed in saying that the one of her favourites whom she had most cared for was Lanskoï. She mourned long for him. She had a tomb erected near the château of Czarkoselo for his remains, whither I was informed she retired very often alone by moonlight. In fact, Catherine the Great, as Prince de Ligne called her, was like a man: one can only speak of her weaknesses as one does of those of Francis I. or Louis XIV., weaknesses which did not influence the

happiness of her subjects in any way. I am very sorry that Madame la Duchesse d'Abrantès who has recently published a work on Catherine II., either did not read what was written by the Prince de Ligne and Comte de Ségur, or else would not submit to these two incontestable authorities. She would more justly have appreciated and admired what distinguishes this great Empress, considered in the light of a Sovereign, and she would have had more respect for the memory of a woman of whom our sex may be proud under so many important respects.

Catherine II. loved whatever was grand in art. She caused to be built at the Hermitage saloons like those at the Vatican, and had the fifty paintings by Raffaelle copied which ornament them, she also decorated the Academy with plaster models of the most beautiful antique statues and several paintings by different masters. The Hermitage, which she had erected and placed near her palace, was a model of good taste, and caused the heavy architecture of the

Imperial Palace at St. Petersburg to look all the more hideous. It is well known she wrote French with the greatest facility.

I have seen at the Library of St. Petersburg the original manuscript containing the code of laws which she gave to the Russians in French, entirely written by her own hand. Her style, I have been told, was elegant and very concise, which reminds me of a tale about her which I find charming. When General Souwaroff had won the battle of Warsaw, Catherine sent off a courier at once to him, and this courier only carried to the fortunate conqueror an envelope on which she had written with her own hand: "To the Marshal Souwaroff."

This woman whose power was so great was, when alone, the simplest and least exacting of her sex. She rose at five in the morning, lit her fire and made her coffee. It is related that one day having lit it without knowing that a sweep had gone up the chimney, the man began to swear horribly at her, fancying he had to deal with one of

the servants. The Empress hastened to put out the fire, not without laughing at hearing herself thus treated.

As soon as she had breakfasted she wrote her letters, prepared her despatches, and remained alone till nine o'clock. Then she rang for her valets, who sometimes did not answer her bell. One day, for example, impatient at waiting, she opened the door of the room where they sat, and, finding them playing cards, she demanded why they did not come when she rang; whereupon one of them quietly replied that they had wanted to finish their game, and no more was said on the subject. Another time Lady Bruce, who came to see her at all hours, arrived one morning and found her alone seated at her toilette.

"Your Majesty is very lonely," said Lady Bruce.

"What, can I do?" replied the Empress, "my waiting-maids have all abandoned me. I tried on a dress, and it fitted so badly I became angry, and they left me. Even Reinette, my first woman-in-waiting, went

with the others, and I am waiting till they have regained their good humour.

In the evenings Catherine assembled together a few of her favourite courtiers. She made her grandchildren come also, and they played blind-man's buff and other games till ten, when Her Majesty retired to bed. The Princess Dolgorouki has often told me how much the gaiety and pleasantness shown by the Empress enhanced the charm of these evening gatherings. The Comte Stackelberg was often present as well as Comte de Ségur, whose wit and agreeableness was appreciated by Catherine. When she broke with France and dismissed this ambassador,* she expressed her regret at losing him. "But," she added, "I am an aristocrat; everybody ought to follow their calling."

The names of the people invited by the Empress to her little evening entertainments, as well as the presence of the youthful Grand-

* The Comte Esterhazy, sent by Louis XVIII. was the French Ambassador, received at the Russian Court when I arrived there.—(*Author's note.*)

Dukes and Duchesses, ought to have been a sufficient guarantee of the order which reigned there; but there appeared a frightful libel at St. Petersburg accusing Catherine of presiding every evening over dreadful orgies. The author of this infamous pamphlet was discovered and expelled from Russia; but it must be stated that this libelist was a French émigré, distinguished for his cleverness, who had so interested the Empress in his misfortunes that she had housed him most comfortably and given him a pension of twelve thousand roubles! Many persons attributed the death of Catherine to the sorrow caused her by the rupture of the marriage between her granddaughter the Grand-Duchess Alexandrine, and the young King of Sweden. This Prince arrived at St. Petersburg with his uncle, the Duc de Sudermanie, the 14th of August, 1796. He was only seventeen; he had a good figure, and his proud and dignified air caused him to be respected, young as he was. His education had been excellent, and he was extremely courteous.

The Princess whom he had come to marry was fourteen, and very pretty; he became much in love with her, I remember that one evening having come to see the portrait of his future fiancée, which I had painted, he gazed at it with so much attention that his hat fell from his hand.

The Empress ardently desired this marriage, but she insisted on her granddaughter having a clergyman of her own religion at Stockholm, and the young King, notwithstanding all his love for the Duchess Alexandrine, refused to consent to that which was opposed to the laws of his country. Knowing that Catherine had ordered the Patriarch to come and affiance them after the ball to be given that evening, the King would not appear there, in spite of the numerous visits made by M. de Marcoff to induce him to do so. I was then painting the portrait of the Comte Diedrestein; we both kept on going to the window to see if the young King would give way to so many persuasive arguments, and take the road to the ball; but he would not yield. After-

wards, from what I heard from the Princesse Dolgorouki, everybody was assembled when the Empress opened the door of her room, and said in a constrained voice:

"Ladies, there will be no ball this evening."

The King of Sweden and the Duc de Sudermanie quitted St. Petersburg the next morning.

Whether it was sorrow caused by this event, or not, which abridged the days of Catherine, Russia was destined to lose her very soon. The Sunday preceding her death, I went the morning after the mass to present to Her Majesty the portrait I had made of the Grand-Duchess Elisabeth. The Empress came towards me and complimented me about it, and then said: "They insist on your doing my portrait, I am very old, but since they desire it so much I will give you the first sitting this day week." The Thursday after, she did not ring at nine o'clock as usual. They waited till ten and even later; at last the head

waiting-maid entered. Not seeing the Empress in her room, she went to the little clothes-cupboard, and as soon as she opened the door the body of Catherine fell to the ground. No one knew at what hour she had been seized with the apoplectic attack which had stricken her down; but her pulse still beat, therefore they did not lose all hope. I never beheld in my life a more wide-spread consternation. For my part, I was so overcome with horror and grief when I heard this terrible news, that my daughter, who was then convalescent, perceived something was wrong, and was much upset in consequence.

After my dinner I rushed to the Princesse Dolgorouki, where the Comte Cobentzel, who went every ten minutes to the Palace to know what was passing, came and gave us tidings. The anxiety was intense, everybody felt it, for not only were they fond of Catherine but they had a great dread of the reign of Paul!

Towards evening Paul arrived from a place near Saint Petersburg, which he

always inhabited. When he beheld his mother lying before him, nature asserted her rights; he approached the Empress, kissed her hand, and shed a few tears. At last towards nine in the evening Catherine II. expired, on the 17th of November, 1795. Comte Cobentzel, who saw her breathe her last, came immediately to tell us she was no more.

I confess that it was with fear I left the Princess Dolgorouki, because it was reported all around me that there was going to be a revolution against Paul. The dense crowd I saw, while going home, in the square of the château, did not tend to reassure me; nevertheless this crowd was so quiet that I soon thought, and with some truth, that for the present we had nothing to fear. The next day the people again congregated in the square, and demonstrated their grief by the most piteous wails. Old men, young men, and children, called out *matusha* (mother) and said, with tears, that they had lost everything in losing her. The gloom of this day did not augur well for the

Prince, who was then ascending his throne.

The body of the Empress remained exposed for six weeks in a large saloon in the château, which was illuminated day and night, and splendidly decorated. Catherine lay on a couch, surrounded by escutcheons, bearing the arms of all the cities in the Empire. Her face was uncovered, her beautiful hand was placed on the bed. All the ladies, of whom some took turns to watch by the body, kissed this hand or pretended to do so; as for me, I had never done so when she was alive, and I could not do so after death. I avoided looking at the face of Catherine II. even, for it would have been so sadly present in my imagination afterwards.

After his mother's death, Paul caused the body of his father, Peter III, to be exhumed; it had been buried for thirty five-years in the convent of Alexander Newski. There were only a few bones found in the coffin and one sleeve of the uniform. Paul wished to have the same honours paid to these

remains as to those of Catherine. He had them exhibited in the middle of the church of Cazan, and service was performed by old officers, friends of Peter III., who were obliged by his son to be present, and who were well rewarded in consequence.

The time arrived for the funerals, the coffin of Peter III., on which his son had placed a crown, was transported near that of Catherine, and both were taken to the citadel, that of Peter first; for Paul wished to cast a slight upon his mother's remains. I watched this mournful spectacle from my window, as one might a scene at a play. The coffin of the defunct Emperor was preceded by a guardsman, clad in gold armour from head to foot. The one who walked in front of the Empress's coffin wore only steel armour,* and the assassins of Peter III. were compelled, by command of his son, to carry the ends of the pall which covered him. Paul followed the procession on foot, bareheaded, with his

* The cavalier who wore the gold armour died of the fatigue.

wife and the whole Court, who were very numerous and in deep mourning. The ladies had long trains and huge black veils falling around them. They had to walk thus, in the snow, in fearfully cold weather, from the Palace to the fortress,* which is some distance on the other side of the Neva. I saw several ladies looking nearly dead of cold and fatigue on their return.

Mourning was worn six months. The women had pointed caps coming low on the forehead, which did not improve their appearance at all; but this slight annoyance was as nothing compared to the alarm felt throughout the Empire at the death of Catherine II.

* It is in the fortress that all the Russian sovereigns are interred. The tomb of Peter I. is one of the plainest possible.—(*Author's note.*)

CHAPTER VIII.

Paul I.—His Character—Fire at Pergola—Frogères—M. d'Autichamp—Koutaisoff—Madame Chevalier.

PAUL I., born the 1st of October, 1754, ascended the throne the 12th of October, 1796. What I have already related about the funeral of Catherine shows plainly that the new Emperor did not participate in the grief of the nation, and, moreover, it is well known that he decorated Nicolas Zouboff, who brought him the tidings of his mother's death, with the Order of St. Andrew.

Paul was clever, intelligent and energetic; but the originality of his character verged

on madness. This unlucky Prince had outbursts of kindness and generosity which were often succeeded by fits of rage, and his kindnesses or anger, his favour or displeasure, were entirely caused by some passing caprice. His first act, as soon as he ascended the throne was to exile Platon Zouboff to Siberia, and to confiscate the greater portion of his property. Shortly after, he recalled him, restored him his property, and the whole Court beheld him present this ex-favourite to the Georgian Ambassadors with the greatest affability, and load him with kindnesses.

One evening, I was present at a ball given by the Court. Everyone, with the exception of the Emperor, was masked, and men and women wore black dominoes. There was a crush at one of the doors leading from one saloon to another; a young man, being in a hurry to get in, pushed against a woman who began to shriek. Paul immediately turned to one of his aides-de-camp:

"Go," said he, "conduct this gentleman

to the fortress, and see that he is shut up carefully."

The aide-de-camp did not delay in returning to say that he had fulfilled this command.

"But," added he, "Your Majesty ought to know that this young man is very short sighted; here is a proof of it."

And he showed him the prisoner's spectacles which he had brought with him. Paul, after having tried them to assure himself of the truth of the fact, said quickly:

"Run and fetch him and take him to his relations; I cannot rest till you have returned and I hear that he has gone to his home."

The slightest departure from Paul's commands was punished with exile to Siberia, or imprisonment at least, so that from never being able to tell where madness, coupled with arbitrary power, was likely to lead him, people lived in a perpetual terror. Soon no one dared to receive their friends at home;

or if they did so, they took care to close the shutters; and when there was a ball, the carriages were sent away so as to avoid attracting attention. Everyone was watched for their words or actions, so that I heard it said there was no class of society without its spies. People refrained, as a rule, from speaking about the Emperor. I remember one day visiting amongst a small circle of friends, and a lady who did not know me, and who was growing bold on this subject stopped short when she saw me enter. The Comtesse Golovin was obliged to say to her before she would continue her discourse:

"You may speak out without fear, it is Madame Le Brun."

All this sounded rather fearful after having lived under Catherine, who permitted full liberty to each, without being able, it is true, to pronounce the word.

It would take too long to relate on how many futile acts Paul exercised his tyranny. He had ordered everybody to bow to his

Palace, even when he was absent. For instance, he forbade round hats to be worn, because he considered they were a sign of Jacobinism. The police knocked off with their sticks all the round hats they met, to the great annoyance of the people, whose ignorance had been the cause of their bareheaded condition. Everybody was compelled to wear powder. When this order was issued, I was painting the portrait of young Prince Bariatinski, and, as I had begged him not to come powdered he had consented not to do so. I saw him arrive one day as white as a sheet.

"What has happened?" said I.

"I have just seen the Emperor," said he, still trembling, "I had barely time to rush under a doorway, but I fear he must have recognised me."

This alarm of Prince Bariatinski was not at all surprising; persons of all classes felt it also; for no inhabitant of St. Petersburg was certain in the morning to sleep that evening in his bed. For my part, I can say I experienced the greatest fright I ever had

in my life under Paul's reign. I went to Pergola for the day; I was accompanied by M. de Rivière, my coachman, and Peter, my good Russian servant. Whilst M. de Rivière was walking about with his gun, trying to shoot birds or rabbits, which I must remark were never much injured by his presence, I remained on the border of the lake, when I suddenly observed the fire which had been lighted to cook our dinner spreading amongst the pines and making great progress. The pines touched each other, Pergola is not far from St. Petersburg. I screamed loudly, whilst calling M. de Rivière, and fear helping us, we four managed to stifle the flames, not until we had cruelly burnt our hands though; but we thought of the Emperor, of Siberia, and fear, as it may be imagined, gave us courage!

I cannot describe the terror with which Paul inspired me, and can only account for it by knowing how universal was the feeling; for I must confess that to me he was never otherwise than polite and kind. When I first saw him at St. Petersburg, he im-

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mediately remembered I had been presented to him in Paris, under the title of the Comte du Nord. I was very young at that time, and so many years had passed since that I had forgotten him; but princes are as a rule gifted with the faculty of remembering people and names, it is with them a natural gift. Amongst the many singular commands with which his reign was distinguished, was one it was very annoying to have to submit to, compelling women as well as men to get out of their carriages when the Emperor passed. Now, Paul was frequently to be met in the streets of St. Petersburg, seeing that he was always rushing about them, sometimes on horseback attended by a small suite, and often in a sleigh without any escort or sign by which he could be recognised. Nevertheless, people were forced to obey his order, or else run great risks, but all will agree it was cruel in the most biting cold to have suddenly to step into the snow. One day finding myself near when he was passing, my coachman not having seen him, I had

only time to call out: "Stop! it is the Emperor!"

But as the door was opened, and I was going to descend the steps, he came out of his sleigh and hastened to prevent my doing so, saying most graciously that his command was not for foreigners and certainly not for Madame Le Brun.

One reason why Paul's kindest whims were not reassuring for the future, was that no man could be more inconstant in his ideas and affections. In the beginning of his reign, for instance, he detested Bonaparte; later on he took such a fancy to him that the portrait of the French hero was kept in his sanctum, and he showed it to everybody. His favour or displeasure was of no duration; Count Strogonoff was, I believe, the only man he never ceased to esteem and like. He was not known to have any favourites amongst the courtiers; but he amused himself a good deal with a French actor, called Frogères, a man of some talent and wit. Frogères entered the Emperor's rooms at all hours without being announced;

they were often to be seen walking in the gardens arm in arm, talking about French literature, which Paul was fond of, and principally of our stage.

This actor was often admitted to the private reunions of the Court, and as he had a decided talent for hoaxing, he indulged it to its fullest extent with some of the highest noblemen present, much to the amusement of the Emperor, but not equally pleasing to the victims of these pranks. The Grand-Dukes themselves were not exempt from the practical jokes of Frogères; who, after Paul's death, did not dare to show himself at the palace.

The Emperor Alexander met him, when walking alone one day, in the streets of Moscow and called him up.

"Frogères, why have you not been to see me?" said he kindly.

"Sire," replied Frogères, whose fears had vanished, "I did not know your Majesty's address."

The Emperor laughed at this sally, and caused the French actor to be well

paid for his remaining engagements, which the poor man had never dared ask for till then.

After having lived for some time under Paul, it was natural that Frogères should dread the resentment of a Sovereign; for Paul was so vindictive, that the greater portion of his misdoings may be attributed to his hatred for the Russian aristocracy, of whom he had had cause for complaint during Catherine's lifetime. He confounded the innocent with the guilty in this dislike, detested the great lords, and took a delight in humiliating those he did not exile. He was very kind to foreigners, on the contrary, especially towards the French; and I must say he was always good to the strangers and *émigrés* who came from France. Many of these were most generously assisted by him.

I can mention amongst others, the Comte d'Autichamp, who, finding himself at St. Petersburg utterly destitute of resources, invented some elastic slippers which were really very pretty. I bought a pair which I

showed that same evening to the Princesse Dolgorouki and several other Court ladies. They were considered charming, and this combined with the interest inspired by the *émigré*, caused several pairs to be ordered. It was not long before the little shoes were brought to the Emperor's notice, who, as soon as he learned the workman's name, had him presented and gave him a nice situation. Unfortunately, it was a position of some confidence, and the Russians were so much offended, that Paul could not leave the Comte d'Autichamp in it for any time; but he contrived to recompense him so well, that he put him out of the way of want.

Hearing so many instances of this description made me more indulgent towards the Emperor than it did the Russians, whose peace was continually menaced by the foolish caprices of a powerful madman. It would be difficult to give any idea of the fears, discontent, and secret murmuring in the Court which I had known so contented and happy. It may be truth-

fully stated that whilst Paul reigned, fear ruled everyone.

As it is impossible to torment people without tormenting oneself as well, Paul was far from leading a happy life. He was haunted by the thought that he would die either by poison or the knife, and this shows how much disorder there was in the conduct of this wretched Prince. Whilst day and night saw him rushing through the streets of St. Petersburg alone, he took the precaution of keeping a cooking apparatus in his room, and the rest of his kitchen arrangements were conducted with the utmost secrecy.

The whole was superintended by the faithful Koutaisoff, a confidential servant, who had followed him from Paris and never left his person. This Koutaisoff was devoted to the Emperor, and not even jealousy could make him change in his feelings towards him; for Paul did him a bad turn in taking his mistress from him, the prettiest actress in the St. Petersburg theatre. She was a Madame Chevalier and acted very success-

fully in comic operettas. Her face and voice were charming, and she sang with much feeling and expression. Koutaisoff was passionately fond of her, when the Emperor followed suit, which so troubled the poor man that his reason nearly left him, and his situation suffered also, as will be seen hereafter in a terrible manner.

Paul was extremely ugly. A flat nose, and very large mouth full of long teeth, made him resemble a death's head. His eyes were very piercing, but could look soft at times. He was neither fat nor thin, and of medium height, and although he had a somewhat distinguished carriage, his face was just the one for a caricature; so that, notwithstanding the danger of such a pastime, numbers were forthcoming. One amongst others represented him holding a paper in each hand: one was written, *order;* on the other, *counter order;* and on his forehead, *disorder.* The mere recollection of this caricature makes me shiver; for one felt that it was a matter of death,

not only for the one who had composed it, but for all who had even produced it.

Nevertheless, St. Petersburg was not an unpleasant residence for an artist. The Emperor Paul loved and protected the fine arts. Being fond of French literature, he attracted and retained by his generosity the actors to whom he was indebted for the knowledge of our master-pieces, and none possessing a talent for music or painting could pass unnoticed by him.

Doyen, my father's friend, and the historical painter I have already spoken about several times, was as much patronised by Paul I. as he was by Catherine II. Although very aged at the time, Doeyn, who had a very simple and frugal way of living, would only accept a portion of the generous offers made by the Empress. The Emperor continued the same generosity, and ordered a ceiling for the new Palace of St. Michel which was not yet furnished.

The room where Doyen worked was near the Hermitage; Paul and the whole Court

crossed it to go to mass, and it was seldom that the Emperor did not stop to have a chat with the painter in a most friendly manner. This reminds me that one day a nobleman following him, went up to Doyen and said : ·

" Allow me, Sir, to make an observation ; you are painting the Hours dancing around the chariot of the Sun ; I see one over there much farther off, smaller than the rest ; and yet the Hours are all alike."

" Sir," replied Doyen, with much gravity, " you are quite right, but the one you speak of is only half an hour." ·

The inquirer made a sign of approval and retired very pleased with himself.

I must not omit to say that the Emperor, wishing to pay the price of the ceiling before it was terminated, sent Doyen a bank note for a considerable sum, whose value I forget ; but it was wrapped in a paper on which Paul had written. " Here is something with which to buy colours : as for the oil, there still remains plenty in the lamp."

If my father's old friend was pleased with his fortune at St. Petersburg, I was none the less pleased with mine. I worked unceasingly from morning to evening. Only on Sundays I lost two hours, which I was obliged to give to those who wished to visit my studio, amongst the number were often the Grand-Dukes and Grand-Duchesses. Besides the paintings of which I have spoken and numerous portraits, I had procured from Paris my picture of Queen Marie Antoinette, the one in which I painted her in a blue velvet dress—the interest it caused gave me great pleasure. Prince de Condé, then at St. Petersburg, having come to see it, did not say a word but burst into tears.

I might have imagined myself in Paris in those days, there were so many French present at the parties. I met once more the Duc de Richelieu and Comte de Langeron; but they were quite residents, the first being Governor of Odessa and the second always employed for any

military inspections; but it was not the same case with several other compatriots. I renewed acquaintance with the amiable and excellent Comtesse Ducrest de Villeneuve. Not only was she pretty, but very kind-hearted. I often saw her, both at St. Petersburg and at Moscow; one day when I was going to dine with her, I met with an accident, which is not uncommon in Russia, but which terrified me exceedingly. M. de Villeneuve came to fetch me in a sleigh; it was so cold that my forehead was quite frost bitten. I called aloud in my horror, "I cannot think! I shall not be able to paint again!" M. de Villeneuve took me quickly into a shop where I was rubbed with snow, and this remedy, employed by all Russians in such cases, soon cured my complaint. Every day increased the circle of my acquaintance. I often met M. Demidoff, the wealthiest private gentleman in Russia. His father had left him such a goodly heritage of iron and other mines, that his fortune was continually

increasing. His great wealth caused him to be married to a Strogonoff, a descendant of one of the noblest and most ancient families in Russia. Their union was a very happy one, although his wife was very charming and graceful, he never, I believe, cared much for her, but she lived very contentedly with him nevertheless. They only left two sons, one of whom lives generally in Paris, and like his father, is a great patron of painting.

CHAPTER IX.

Portrait of the Empress Marie—The Grand-Dukes—The Archimandrite—Fête at Peterhoff—The King of Poland—His Death—Joseph Poniatowski.

HAVING been ordered by the Emperor to paint a portrait of the Empress, his wife, I represented her on foot, wearing a court dress and a crown of diamonds. I do not care to paint diamonds, the brush cannot give them sufficient brilliancy. But by making a background of a crimson velvet curtain, which brought out the crown into relief, I managed to make it as brilliant as it

was possible to do. When I had the painting in my own rooms to finish it, they wished to lend me the court dress with the diamonds as well, but I refused this mark of confidence which would have made me live in a state of terror; I preferred to paint them at the Palace, and had my painting carried back accordingly.

The Empress Marie was a handsome woman; and from being rather stout, looked still fresh. She was tall, and commanding, with splendid fair hair. I remember seeing her once at a ball with her beautiful curly locks falling each side of her shoulders, surmounted by a coronet of diamonds; this tall and stately figure rose majestically by the side of Paul, forming a striking contrast. A noble disposition was added to so much beauty; the Empress Marie was really like the woman spoken of in the Bible, and her virtues were so well known that she was perhaps the only instance of a woman, whom calumny dared not attack. I con-

fess that I felt proud at being honoured by her notice, and the nice ways in which she always showed her kindness.

Our sittings always took place after the Court dinner, so that the Emperor and his two sons, Alexander and Constantine, were often present. These august personages did not make me feel at all embarrassed, as the Emperor, the only one I feared, was always good to me. One day he brought me my cup of coffee himself, as I was standing at my easel, waited till I had finished it and took it away again. Once he made me witness a rather curious scene. I had placed a screen behind the Empress, so as to have a stationary background. During one of the pauses, Paul began to cut all sorts of capers, like a monkey; scratching at the screen and pretending to climb over it, this game lasted some time. Alexander and Constantine were evidently grieved at seeing their father behave in such a remarkable manner before a stranger, and it made me feel uncomfortable also.

During one of my sittings, the Empress

brought her two younger sons, the Grand-Duke Nicholas and the Grand-Duke Michael. I never saw a finer child than the Grand-Duke Nicholas, afterwards Emperor. I could almost paint him from memory even now, so much did I admire his lovely face, quite Grecian in its character.

I also remember one whose type of beauty was quite different, as he was an old man. Although the Emperor in Russia is the head of the Church, as well as of the Army and State, religious power is exercised under him by the first Pope, called "the great Archimandrite," who is to the Russians what the Pope is for us. Since I had lived in St. Petersburg, I had often heard of the merit and virtues of him who filled this post, and one day, several of my acquaintances who often saw him having suggested my accompanying them, I willingly accepted their offer.

He was a strikingly majestic and handsome man, with a long white beard falling below his breast, adding still more to the venerable character of his appearance. The

gravity of his rank did not prevent him from being gracious and pleasant with everybody. One day, a Princess Galitzin, who was very beautiful, seeing him in a garden, ran and threw herself on her knees before him. The old gentleman at once plucked a rose with which he gave her his benediction.

One of my regrets on leaving Russia was that I had never painted his portrait; I do not think anyone could have beheld a finer model.

Another personage whom I frequently met and for whom I had a most friendly regard, lived then at St. Petersburg as a private gentleman. It was Stanislas-Auguste-Poniatowski, last King of Poland. In my youth I had often heard about this Prince, who had not then ascended the throne, from several people who had met him at Madame Geoffrin's where he frequently dined.

All who knew him at that time were loud in their praises of his goodness and fine bearing. Whether fortunate or not for him,

it is difficult to decide, but he went to St. Petersburg, and Catherine II. took a fancy to the handsome Pole, and when she ascended the throne, used her best endeavours to make him King of Poland. Poniatowski was crowned on the 7th of October, 1764.

It must be supposed that love in a Sovereign is quickly superseded by ambition, for this same Catherine soon destroyed her work and overthrew the monarchy she had once protected. The destruction of Poland being decided upon, Replin and Stakelberg, Russian Ambassadors, became the actual rulers of this unfortunate kingdom, until the day came when it ceased to exist. Their Court became more numerous than that of the Prince, whom they did not cease to insult and who was King only in name.

Stanislas-Auguste-Poniatowski was kind, good, and very brave, but perhaps he was lacking in that energy which it was necessary for him to possess, in order to restrain the rebellious spirit which reigned in his

country. He did his best to be agreeable both to the aristocracy and the nation, and succeeded in some measure; but there existed too many elements of disorder in the interior and his success would have been a miracle. Therefore he gave way and retired to Grodno, where he lived on a pension made him by Russia, Prussia, and Austria, who between them divided his kingdom.

The Emperor Paul I., after Catherine's death, invited Poniatowski to St. Petersburg to assist at his coronation. During the whole ceremony, which was very long, the ex-king was left standing, which from his advanced age made a painful impression on all who were present. Paul showed himself kinder towards him another time when he pressed him to stay at St. Petersburg, where he lodged him in the marble Palace, which stands on the beautiful quay of the Neva. By a singular coincidence, this Palace was situated nearly opposite the fortress where Catherine II. is interred.

The King of Poland was otherwise agreeably located. He had formed a very pleasant society around him, mostly composed of Frenchmen, and a few strangers. He was kind enough to seek me out and invite me to his private receptions; he called me his *bonne amie*, as did Prince Kaunitz at Vienna. Nothing affected me more than to hear him say, how happy he should have felt had I been in Warsaw when he was King. I remembered at that time someone told him I was going to Poland, and he said that he would treat me with the greatest distinction; but all allusion to the past struck me as being painful for him. Stanislas Poniatowski was very noble. His face was full of sweetness and benevolence. He was a most agreeable man in conversation, being well versed in literature. He was so devoted to painting, that when he lived in Warsaw he frequently visited the artists residing in that city. His kindness was unequalled. I remember receiving myself a proof of it, which even now causes me to feel ashamed. Sometimes when I am painting, I seem to

lose sight of everybody and everything except my model, which has often caused me to behave in a very rude manner to those who happen to disturb me when at work.

One morning, being engaged in finishing a portrait, the King of Poland came to see me, having heard the sound of several horses at the door I fancied whom it might be; but was so absorbed in my work that I felt vexed, so much so indeed, that when he opened my door, I called out: "I am not at home." The King said not a word, but put on his coat again and departed. As soon as I had quitted my palette, I remembered how I had behaved, and felt so ashamed that I went that same evening to the King of Poland to make my excuses and ask for forgiveness.

"How you greeted me this morning!" said he, as soon as he saw me, and added, "I can quite understand that when one disturbs an artist who is very busy, it is annoying to her, so believe me I do not feel at all annoyed with you." And he made

me remain to supper, all my behaviour being forgiven.

I rarely missed the little suppers given by the King of Poland. Lord Whitworth, the English Ambassador at the Russian Court, and the Marquis de Rivière were also very faithful in their attendance. We all three preferred these friendly gatherings to the larger crushes; for after supper we often had a charming conversation, which the King knew how to enliven by a number of interesting anecdotes.

One evening, after I had been at the palace a short time, I was struck by the singular change which I observed in the looks of our dear Prince; his left eye appeared to me so dead and lustreless that I felt terrified. On leaving, I said on the stairs to Lord Whitworth and the Marquis de Rivière, whose arm I had taken:

"Do you know that the King causes me great uneasiness?"

"Why," they asked, "he seems in excellent health; and has been conversing in his usual spirits."

"I have the misfortune to be a good physiognomist,"* I replied, "and I noticed how curious his eyes looked, the King will not live long."

Alas! I had guessed only too correctly; for the next day he was struck down by an attack of apoplexy, and shortly after was interred in the fortress near Catherine. It was with real grief that I heard of this death, a feeling shared by all who had known the King of Poland. Stanislas Poniatowski never married; he had a niece and two nephews. The eldest of these last Princes, Joseph Poniatowski is well known for his military skill and bravery, which have caused him to be surnamed the "Polish Bayard." When I knew him first, he might have been six or seven and twenty. He had very little hair on his forehead, but his face was remarkably handsome. He had shown so

* It is seldom that I am deceived in appearances. The last time I saw the Duchesse de Mazarin, who was feeling very well and looking in perfect health, I said to my husband. "The Duchesse will not be alive in a month;" which happened as I had predicted.—(*Author's note.*)

much bravery and military knowledge in the last wars against the Turks, that he was unanimously proclaimed chief captain, and I was astonished on seeing him, to think one so young should have gained such a reputation. Everyone vied with their neighbours at St. Petersburg in the pleasure of greeting and fêting him.

During a grand supper that was given him, and to which I was invited, all the women begged him to have his portrait taken by myself, he replied with that modesty which was his chief characteristic:

"I must win several battles before being painted by Madame Le Brun."

When I next beheld Joseph Poniatowski in Paris, I should not have recognised him, he was so much altered. He wore a frightful wig which made him look quite different. But his renown had so much increased, that he could console himself for the loss of his beauty. He was then preparing to wage war against Germany, under Napoleon, whose faithful ally he had become, in his

quality of Pole. His bravery in the campaigns of 1812 and 1813 is well known, as is the mournful incident which put an end to this noble career.

Joseph Poniatowski's brother did not resemble him at all; he was tall, stiff, and cold. I did not see much of him at St. Petersburg; but I recollect his coming one morning to see the portrait of the Comtesse Strogonoff, and occupying himself solely with the frame of the picture. He had a great idea of his knowledge of painting though, and was guided in his judgments by an artist who drew very well, but who was chiefly distinguished by copying Raffaelle's designs, which gave him a supreme contempt for the French school.

Madame Ménichek, the King of Poland's niece, was very kind to me, and it was with pleasure that I met her again in Paris. I painted her daughter's portrait at St. Petersburg, she was then quite a child; and that of her uncle, the King of Poland as well, dressed in the costume of the time of

Henri IV. The first portrait I made of that good Prince I kept for myself.*

* This splendid portrait is now the property of M. J. Tripier Le Franc, a nephew by marriage of Madame Vigée Le Brun.

CHAPTER X.

My Reception by the St. Petersburg Academy—My Daughter—Sorrow caused by her Marriage—The Countess Czarnicheff—I leave for Moscow.

ONE of the nicest souvenirs I have left is that of my reception as Member of the St. Petersburg Academy. I was informed by Count Strogonoff, then director, of the day fixed on for my reception. I had ordered for myself the Academy uniform, a riding habit with a little violet waiscoat, yellow petticoat, and black hat and feathers.

At one o'clock I entered a salon preceding a long gallery, at the end of which

I distinguished Count Strogonoff, seated at a table. I was asked to go towards him. In order to do so, I had to cross this long gallery filled with spectators, but as, fortunately, I knew many people amongst this crowd I did not feel very nervous. The Count made me a very complimentary little discourse, and then gave me from the Emperor the diploma which made me a Member of the Academy. In the evening, I met several persons who had been present at the spectacle. I was applauded for my courage in crossing the gallery full of people. "I could not have done so," I replied, "had I not known how kindly disposed they all were to me."

I made my own portrait for the Academy of St. Petersburg, and represented myself painting, with my palette in my hand.

I linger on these pleasant episodes in my life, for I long to avoid speaking about the sorrows and worries which troubled my sojourn at St. Petersburg, but I must now enter into some of these sad details.

My daughter was seventeen years old.

She was very charming; her large blue eyes were full of mirth, her nose was slightly *retroussé*, her pretty mouth, beautiful teeth, and fresh complexion formed as lovely a face as one could wish to see. She was not very tall, but slim, without being thin. She had great ease of manner and sprightliness. Her memory was wonderful; she remembered everything she had learnt in lessons or from reading. She sang delightfully, for at Naples and at St. Petersburg I had given her the best teachers, as well as English and German masters; but what pleased me most of all was her great aptitude for painting, so that I cannot express how happy and proud I was at her many accomplishments.

I beheld in my daughter the joy of my life and the comfort of my old age, so that it was not surprising that she had her own way in most things. My friends said sometimes that I loved her so devotedly that I obeyed her, but I replied, "Do you not see that she is beloved by all?" In fact, she was appreciated by the most distinguished people and much sought after. I was never invited

without her, and I enjoyed the successes she obtained in society much more than I had enjoyed my own.

As it was but seldom I could leave my studio in the morning, I had consented to leave my daughter with the Countess Czernicheff sometimes, as she often took her for sleighing parties, which she much enjoyed, and the Countess also made her spend the evening with them when I was absent. There was often to be met there a man called Nigris, the secretary to Count Czernicheff. This man was good-looking and had a nice figure, and appeared about thirty years of age. As for his accomplishments, he drew a little, and his writing was very good. His soft ways and melancholy glances gave him a romantic and interesting appearance, which had such an effect upon my daughter that she fell in love with him. Immediately the Czernicheff family began to lay plans and try to make him my son-in-law. Being informed of what was passing, my sorrow was very great, as may well be imagined, and painful it was for me to think of giving my

daughter, my only child, to a man with neither talent, fortune, nor family. I made inquiries about Monsieur Nigris. Some spoke well of him, but others spoke ill, so the days passed without my being able to decide on anything.

In vain did I try to persuade my daughter that this marriage would not be a happy one for her under the circumstances. Her head was quite turned, and she would not listen to the dictates of my love and experience. On the other hand, the people who had resolved on my consent employed every means in their power to tear it from me. They told me Monsieur Nigris would run away with my daughter and have a clandestine marriage. I did not believe it though,* for Monsieur Nigris had no money and the family which protected him were not overburdened with it either. They threatened me with the Emperor, and I replied, "I shall tell him that a mother's rights are

* He had so little money that he was obliged to ask for a few ducats to give to the church the day of his wedding. —(*Author's note.*)

older and better than those of all the Emperors living." The cabal which had formed against me was so sure of making me give way to persecution, that they actually asked me for a wedding portion, as I was supposed to be very rich. I remember that the Neapolitan Ambassador came to see me and ask of me, for this marrriage, a sum which exceeded what I was in possession of at the time; for I had only left France with eighty Louis in my pocket, and a portion of my savings since had been taken from me by the Venetian Bank.

I could have borne the malice and slanders of the cabal, but the hardest thing of all was that my daughter seemed to shun me and treated me no longer with any affection. Finally, she became very thin, and fell quite ill. Then I was compelled to give way. I wrote to Monsieur Le Brun, asking him to give his consent. Monsieur Le Brun, in his letters, had often spoken to me of the wish he had to marry our child to Guérin, whose fame as an artist had reached me even then. This project, which would have suited us so

well, could no longer be realised. I told Monsieur Le Brun the story, and made him feel that having only this one dear child, we ought to sacrifice all to her wish and happiness.

My letter posted, I had the joy of seeing my daughter regain her health; but alas! that joy was the only one she gave me. Her father's answer having taken some time to reach us, owing to the distance, they persuaded her I had only written to prevent him giving his consent to what she called her happiness. This suspicion wounded me deeply; but I wrote several times and showed her my letters, which she posted herself. Such an act of confidence ought to have undeceived her; but no, faithful to the mistrust which they never ceased to inspire her with, she said one day: "I bring you your letters, but I feel sure you have written others in a contrary sense." I felt stupefied and broken-hearted, when just then the post arrived, bringing M. Le Brun's letter and consent. Without being considered

pressing, a mother might have looked for some excuses or thanks; but such was not the case, and my child never showed the slightest contrition for what she had said, though I had sacrificed to her all my desires and intentions.

The marriage was celebrated a few days later. I gave my daughter a handsome trousseau, besides jewellery; and one bracelet surrounded by very fine diamonds, on which was her father's portrait, and I placed her marriage portion, the result of my labours at St. Petersburg, in the hands of Livio, the banker.

The day after I went to see my daughter, I found her very calm and not at all elated by her happiness. A fortnight later, being with her, I said, "Thou art very happy, I hope, now that thou hast really married him?" M. Nigris, who was talking to some one, had his back to us, and as he had a bad cold he wore a large overcoat. She replied, "I confess that this fur garment disenchants me; how can I care for such a figure?" Thus a

fortnight had sufficed for love to fly away.*

As for me, the charm of my life had vanished. I took no longer the same pleasure in my daughter, and yet, God knows how much I loved her still, in spite of her faults. Shortly after her marriage she got small-pox, I had never had that fearful malady, but nothing could prevent my going to take care of her. I found her face so swelled that I was horrified; but my fear was solely on her account, and as long as the illness lasted I had no thought for myself. To my joy she recovered without being disfigured in the least. I then decided on leaving St. Petersburg, where I had suffered so much, that my health had given way, and on going to Moscow. It was not that the marriage, or even the disgraceful reports it had occasioned, had left any traces. Far from that; those who had most injured

I must say that M. Nigris was very kind and had insinuating manners; they lived very happily for some years. —(*Author's Note.*)

me, repented of their injustice, and Count Czernicheff wrote me a letter begging forgiveness for his wrongs towards me; but all these repentances came too late—the arrows had gone home, I could not forget the past and I felt miserable. I did not complain; I kept silent, even with my dearest friends, about my daughter and the man she had chosen for a husband. I did not even tell my brother my grief, though I had often written to him since he had told me of a fresh affliction—for that was a mournful period of my existence—and I had lost my mother.

So many sorrows all at once made me ill, and in order to restore my health, I decided on seeing what change of air would do for me; I hastened to finish my large portrait of the Empress Marie, and I left for Moscow the 15th October in the year 1800.

CHAPTER XI.

A Bad Road—Moscow—Comtesse Strogonoff—Princess Tufakin—Maréchale Soltikoff—Prince Alexander Kourakin—Visit to an Englishwoman—Prince Bezborodko—I return to St. Petersburg.

IT would be difficult, I believe, to undergo greater fatigues than those which awaited me on the way to Moscow. The roads which I had hoped to find frozen were not so, my carrriage kept bumping in and out of the slush, and gave us such fearful jolts that I expected to die at any moment. In order to get a little respite from this torture, I stopped

half way and got down at the Inn of Novgorod, (the only one on the route) in which I had been told I should be well cared for and well fed. Being in great need of rest, and half dead with hunger and fatigue, I asked for a room. Barely was I installed in it, than I noticed a most curious smell which nearly made me sick. The master of the inn, when I begged him to give me another room, was unable to do so, so I resigned myself to my fate; but soon perceiving that this intolerable odour seemed to enter by a glass door which was in the room, I called to the waiter and interrogated him on the subject.

"Ah!" said he quietly, "there is a man behind that door who died yesterday; no donbt he is the cause of what Madame complains."

I asked no more questions; I arose, had the horses harnessed once more, and left, only taking with me a piece of bread for the remainder of the journey to Moscow.

I at last reached this ancient and immense capital. I fancied myself entering Ispahan,

of which I had seen several pictures, so different did Moscow seem from any other European city. Therefore I shall not attempt to describe the effect produced on me by its golden domes, broad streets, and superb palaces; for to have a correct idea of Moscow it ought to be visited.

I descended at the palace kindly placed at my disposal by M. Demidoff. No one inhabited it, so I rejoiced in the thought of perfect quiet. After all my fatigues and privations, my first desire, after having satisfied my appetite, was to sleep; but alas! towards five in the morning I was roused by a fearful noise. A band of Russian musicians, each harping on one note, had taken possession of the room next mine for their practice. This room being very spacious was most likely the only one suited to this performance. I took care to ask the *concierge* if that entertainment went on every day, and on his answering me, that the palace being empty the most spacious apartment was devoted to that practice, I resolved on seeking a

lodging elsewhere and not interfering with the habits of the house.

I went very quickly to visit Countess Strogonoff, the wife of my good old friend, I found her perched on a very high chair that rocked to and fro without ceasing. I could not understand how she managed to endure the continual movement, but she had need of it for her health; she was unable to walk or help herself at all, which however did not prevent her from being amiable. I told her of my worry about apartments, she at once said she had a pretty house, not inhabited, and begged me to live there; but as she refused to hear of any payment, I refused most positively. Seeing that it was vain to try and persuade me, she introduced her daughter who was very pretty, and asked me for the portrait of this young lady as an equivalent, which I accepted with pleasure. A few days afterwards I established myself in my new quarters where I hoped to find peace, since at least I should be by myself.

As soon as I was installed in my new

abode I began to visit the city, as much at least as the weather would permit me to do; for during the five months I spent in Moscow the snow never melted, which deprived me of the pleasure of beholding the environs which I believe are very beautiful. One of the usual customs at Moscow, as well as St. Petersburg, was that of vapour baths. There were some for women and men; only the latter after they have taken their bath, from which they issue, red like lobsters, rush out quite naked and even in extreme cold roll themselves in the snow. To this habit is attributed the strength and healthiness of the Russians. Certainly chest and lung diseases, and rheumatism is unknown to them.

I had noticed at St. Petersburg that the aristocracy seemed to form one family, all the nobles were related to each other; at Moscow, where the population was much larger and the aristocracy more numerous, society was not so private. For instance, six or seven thousand people could be present in the ball-room, where the highest of the

land used to congregate. I went to one of these balls, and was surprised at the large number of pretty girls present. I can say the same of a very fine ball given by the Maréchale Soltikoff. The young women were nearly all beautiful, they wore the antique costume which I had recommended to the notice of the Grand-Duchess Elizabeth for the Empress Catherine's ball. They wore cashmere tunics edged with gold fringe; . splendid diamonds were attached to their short sleeves, and their Greek head-dresses were adorned with narrow bands covered with brilliants. It was impossible for anything to look richer or more elegant than these costumes; they increased the charms of these lovely women still more, owing to their grace. One of those I admired most, was a young lady who shortly after married the Prince Tufakin. Her features were very fine and regular, but her expression was extremely melancholy. When she was married I began her portrait, but could only finish the head at Moscow, so that I carried the picture away to complete

it at St. Petersburg, where I soon learnt the death of the pretty original. She was barely seventeen. I painted her as Iris, with a flowing scarf, seated on clouds.

The Maréchale Soltikoff had one of the nicest houses in Moscow. I paid her a visit on my arrival, and she received me most courteously. Her husband was then Governor of this city. She asked me to paint the Marshal's portrait and that of his daughter, who had married one of Count Vladimir's sons, so that in about ten days I had already commenced six portraits, when an accident, which nearly cost me my life, deprived me of my studio and delayed the execution of my work.

I enjoyed perfect quiet in the house lent me by the Comtesse Strogonoff; but as it had not been inhabited for seven years, the cold was intense. I tried to remedy it by heating all the stoves to their utmost extent. This precaution did not prevent my being obliged to leave a fire in my room at night, and I was so frozen, when in bed, that I rolled my head up in my pillow and tied it

round with a piece of ribbon at the risk of being stifled.

One night after I had been asleep, I was awoke by an asphyxiating smoke. I had just time to ring for my maid, who persisted in saying she had put out all the fires.

"Open the door," said I, and barely had she done so when the room was filled with thick smoke. We were obliged to break the windows; but as I was ignorant of the cause of this smoke, I felt most uneasy. At last I saw one of the men who had lighted the stoves, and he told me he had forgotten to open the chimney which closes the stoves, which is, I believe, placed outside the house.

Being relieved from the fear of having set fire to the Comtesse Strogonoff's house, I visited my rooms, cold though I was. Near the *salon* where I gave my sittings was a large stove, before which I had placed the portrait of the Maréchale Soltikoff to dry; it was so baked and charred that I had to recommence it. But my greatest anxiety was for some paintings by great masters belong-

to my husband, which I had left in a room near my sleeping apartment. I knew they would suffer if they were not removed. It was five in the morning. The smoke had barely dispersed, and since we had broken the glass windows, the place was not habitable. What was I to do? I decided on sending over to kind Madame Ducrest de Villeneuve; she came at once and took me back to her house, where I remained for a fortnight, during which time this charming woman treated me with a kindness I shall never forget.

When I thought it time to return to my own home, I went first with M. Ducrest de Villeneuve to see how it looked. Although the window panes had not been replaced, the whole house had such a strong smell of fire smoke, that I should have found it impossible to live there so soon. I felt very perplexed, when Count Grégoire Orloff, with that courtesy, which is really natural to Russians, came and offered me a house belonging to him which was empty at the time. I accepted this offer and established myself in this new

abode, where I must say the rain soaked through the roof to such an extent, that Marshal Soltikoff, who came to see me, having expressed a desire to see my paintings which were exposed in one of the rooms, asked me for an umbrella. Notwithstanding this new annoyance, I remained in this house till my departure.

I dined once with a Prince Galitzin, whose charming manners made him generally beloved, although he was too old to sit at table with his guests who numbered about forty; the exquisite and abundant repast lasted over three hours, which fatigued me dreadfully, added to which I was placed in front of immense windows and nearly blinded by the glare. This festivity seemed insupportable to me; but I had some compensation before sitting down, in seeing a very old gallery of paintings by the old masters. Prince Galitzin, whose age and infirmities prevented him leaving his arm-chair, had requested his nephew to do me the honours of it. This young man who did not know much about painting, explained the subjects as

well as he could, and I found it difficult to keep from laughing, when, before a picture representing Pysché, not being able to pronounce this word, he said:

"This is Fiché!"

This long repast at Prince Galitzin's recalls another to my mind which I believe has never finished. I was invited to dine at a banker's, a rich, fat man. We were eighteen at table; but never did I behold more ugly or insignificant faces; when I had gazed at them all once, I dared not raise my eyes for fear of seeing them again. There was no conversation, and they might have been taken for wooden figures had they not eaten like ogres. Four hours passed, I felt so tired I nearly fainted; at last I feigned sudden indisposition, and left them at table where most likely they are now.

That was an unlucky day for me; I now forget for what reason I was obliged to visit an English lady. I was taken to see her by an acquaintance who left me, promising to return and fetch me afterwards. As ill luck would have it, this

English lady did not understand a word of French and I not a word of English, so that we were both in a great predicament. I can see her now, seated before a small table on which were two candlesticks, which lit up her white face. She spoke to me out of politeness in her language which I did not understand, and in return I spoke French which was equally unintelligible to her. We thus remained together for over an hour, which seemed to me more like a century, and I believe the poor Englishwoman found it just as long also.

At the time I lived in Moscow, the richest man there and perhaps in Russia was Prince Bezborodko; they said he could raise on his estates an army of thirteen thousand men. His numerous palaces were full of slaves, whom he treated with the greatest kindness and had them taught different trades. He was a very talented man; and was employed in the reigns of Catherine I., and Paul II., first as Secretary to the Cabinet, and then as Secretary of State in 1780. From a desire to escape the

numerous petitions which were addressed to him, he did not make himself easy of access; women sometimes followed him into his carriage when he said in answer to their demands: "I shall forget it;" and if a petition was in question; "I shall lose it!"

He possessed a thorough acquaintance with the Russian language and literature, besides a wonderful memory. One well-known story about him will prove the truth of this. He received one day from the Empress Catherine an order to draw out a new Ukase, which he forgot to do, owing to being much engaged. The next time he met the Empress, she demanded her Ukase. Bezborodko was not at all disconcerted. He drew out a paper from his pocket, and improvised, without the slightest hesitation, the whole project of the law. Catherine was so satisfied with this composition that she took the paper from him, but her astonishment was excessive on finding it a blank page. Bezborodko was about to make many apologies, but she silenced him with compliments, and next day made him her Privy Councillor.

The numerous portraits I had been asked to paint, and the pleasant society I had formed round me at Moscow ought to have kept me for some time in this city, where I only spent five months, six weeks of which were passed in my room, but I was sad and ill. I needed rest and a milder climate, so I resolved to return to St. Petersburg, see my daughter, and leave Russia. Soon after, I announced my intended departure and said my adieux. Everything was done to retain me, but without avail. Many people, I now fancy, were cognisant of the coming Revolution, and they implored me to delay my journey for a few days, saying they would go with me to St. Petersburg; but, being totally ignorant of the plot, I persisted in starting, which was foolish of me, for by waiting a little, I should have avoided the fatigues I underwent on the fearful roads, rendered nearly impassable by the thaw.

CHAPTER XII.

Death of Paul I.—Joy of the Russians—Details of the Assassination—The Emperor Alexander I.—I paint his portrait and that of the Empress Elizabeth—I leave Russia.

ON the 12th of March, 1801, halfway between Moscow and Saint Petersburg, I learned the death of Paul I. I saw before the post-house numbers of couriers, who were going to spread the news through the Empire, and as they took all the horses, I was unable to procure any for myself. I was compelled to remain in my carriage by the road-side all night. There was an icy wind

and I was nearly frozen. At last I procured some horses and did not arrive at St. Petersburg till eight or nine o'clock the following day.

I found the city in transports of delight; people were singing and dancing in the streets. Many of my acquaintances rushed to my carriage and shook my hands, saying, "What a deliverance!" The evening before the houses were illuminated. In fact, the death of this unfortunate prince was a most joyful event for the public.

All the details of this tragedy were well known, and I can assert that the accounts I received that day were consistent one with the other. Palhen, one of the conspirators, did his utmost to terrify Paul about a plot arranged by the Empress and her children, he said, to possess the throne. Paul's usual mistrust made him lend a too ready ear to these false reports, and they irritated him so much that he ended by commanding the perfidious Minister to conduct his wife and children to the fortress. Palhen refused to do so unless he had an

order signed by the Emperor; and Palhen immediately took it to Alexander and showed it him. "You see," said he, "that your father is mad, and you are all lost unless you prevent his doing further harm by shutting him up." Alexander, who saw that his liberty and that of his belongings was menaced, only gave, by his silence, a tacit consent to this project, which consisted in making a maniac powerless to do further evil; but Palhen and his accomplices thought necessary to do even more than that.

Five conspirators were chosen for the execution of the deed, and one of them was Platon Zouboff, Catherine's former favourite, whom Paul had covered with honours after recalling him from exile. All five entered Paul's room; he was in bed. The two guards placed at the door defended the entrance most courageously, so that one was killed;* but they resisted to no purpose. At the sight of these furious men, Paul arose. As he was very strong, he struggled for some

* The Empress Marie took the other into her service. —(*Author's Note.*)

time against his assassins, who at last strangled him in his arm-chair. The wretched man cried out, "You, too, Zouboff! you whom I thought a friend!" and with these words, he expired.

It seemed as though fate had so arranged the circumstances of this plot as to favour it entirely. A regiment had been chosen to defend the palace, and, far from the colonel being in the confidence of the conspirators, this officer was convinced that he had to guard against a plot which would take place against the Emperor's life. A portion of the regiment went into the garden; and were placed under Paul's window, but neither the noise made by the soldiers awoke him nor that of some rooks who usually roosted on the roof, and who croaked violently. Had it been otherwise, the unfortunate Prince might have had time to reach a secret staircase near his room, by which he could have entered the apartment of Madame Narischkin, in whom he had every confidence. Once there, he might have escaped down the canal by a little boat. Moreover, the distrust he

had of his wife had caused him to double-lock the doors which separated his rooms from those of the Empress. When he tried this door, it was too late. The assassins had taken the key. Koutaisoff, his faithful valet, received that very day a letter warning him of the plot; but this man, whose love for Madame Chevalier and jealousy of the Emperor had rendered him quite idiotic, neglected most of his duties, and did not even open his letters to read their contents. He left on his table the one containing the revelation of the conspiracy, and when he opened it the next day, the miserable man nearly died of despair. It was the same with the colonel who had taken his regiment to the palace. This young man, Talaisin by name, when he was told of the crime which had been committed, felt so annoyed at being outwitted, that he was seized with a violent fever and became dangerously ill. I believe that he did not long survive his remorse, innocent though he was; but what I know for a fact is, that the Emperor Alexander I. went to see

him every day whilst he was ill, and forbade the rifle practice which took place near the sick man's house.

Notwithstanding the obstacles of which I have spoken against the committal of the crime, it is to be believed that the authors of the deed had no doubt as to the result; for it was well known in St. Petersburg that a young man called S——ky, one of the conspirators, pulled out his watch towards midnight, and said in the midst of several people:

"It must be all over now!"

Paul was then dead, his body was embalmed and exposed for six weeks on a state bed, the face uncovered and very little decomposed, for they had put on rouge. The Empress Marie, his widow, went every day and knelt and prayed before this funeral couch; she had her youngest sons with her, Nicholas and Michael, who were of such tender years that the former asked her once:

"Why, papa was always asleep?"

The ruse which was employed to make

Alexander I. consent to his father's dethronement, for he never entertained another thought, is a fact which I know from Count Strogonoff, one of the most truthful of men, and who knew more than anyone else what passed at the Russian Court; he was aware of the ease with which Paul must have been made to sign the order for the imprisonment of the Empress and her children, for he knew the fearful suspicions with which this wretched Prince was tormented. The day of the murder there was in the evening a grand Court concert, at which all the Royal family were present. Once, when the Emperor was talking apart to Count Strogonoff, he said:

"You think, no doubt, that I am one of the happiest of mortals? I live in this Palace of St. Michel which I built myself, and I have decorated it to my own taste. I have assembled around me for the first time my whole family; my wife is still beautiful, my eldest son is also very handsome, my daughters are charming; there they are all before me, well, when I

look at them I see in them my assassins." Count Strogonoff drew back horrified.

"You are deceived, Sire, it is an atrocious calumny."

Paul fixed his haggard eyes on him, and squeezing his hand, said:

"What I say to you is the truth."

The miserable monarch was haunted by the thought of his death. Count Strogonoff also told me that, the day before, Paul had said to him in the morning, on looking into the glass and seeing his mouth was on one side:

"When that happens to a man, dear Count, it is time for him to prepare for his journey."

I firmly believe that Alexander was not aware of the attempt on his father's life; nothing could make me believe the contrary, there was nothing to prove it at that time, and the knowledge I had of this Prince's character gave me the assurance of his innocence. Alexander I. was very noble and generous, he was always of a religious dis-

position, and was so frank by nature, that he never made use of astuteness or deceit, even in his policy; and on learning that Paul was no more, his grief was so great that none of those about him doubted of his innocence in this murder. At first he refused to reign; and Elizabeth, his wife, threw herself on her knees to implore him to become Emperor. He then went to the Empress, his mother, who called out:

"Away! away! I see you covered with your father's blood."

Alexander raised his eyes to heaven, and said from the depths of his heart:

"I take God to witness, my mother, that I did not order this fearful crime."

Such an accent of truth was in these few words that the Empress consented to listen to him. When she learnt how the conspirators had deceived her son as to the result of their enterprise, she threw herself at his feet, saying, "I salute thee, my Emperor." Alexander raised her, and kneeling before her, clasped her in his arms, and paid her every mark of love and respect.

This love never wavered. As long as he lived, the Emperor Alexander refused his mother nothing; and he had such a great respect for her that she never missed the honours of her Court; she generally walked before the Empress Elizabeth.

Paul's death gave rise to none of those reactions which follow too often the death of a sovereign. All those who had enjoyed the favour of that Prince preserved the advantages they owed to his protection; Koutaisoff, his valet, the barber whom he had so much enriched and decorated with some of the first Russian orders, remained quietly in possession of his master's beneficence. Madame Chevalier, the pretty actress who had played the part of favourite, remained at the St. Petersburg theatre; but as she had received from Paul a magnificent crown diamond, which was well known in the Castle, several Court personages, fearing no doubt that she would quit the city on learning of Paul's death, resorted to her house on the night of the crime;

Madame Chevalier was in bed and asleep, she was roused, and her terror was great on perceiving at such an hour several people in her room; these gentlemen reassured her, and made her restore the diamond which was of enormous value.

If nothing was changed in the position of Paul's friends, it was otherwise with that of his victims; the exiles returned and recovered their possessions; justice was done to all those who had been sacrificed to numerous caprices, in fact a golden age began for Russia. The enthusiasm was so great that the highest happiness for all was to see and to meet Alexander; if he went to walk in the evening in the summer gardens, if he crossed the street, the crowd encircled him and blessed him, and he, the most affable of princes, received with perfect grace the homage of which he was the object. I could not go to Moscow for his coronation; but many who were present at the ceremony told me nothing

could be more touching or finer; when Alexander placed the diamond crown on the Empress Elizabeth's beautiful head, they formed such an admirable group that the enthusiasm reached its height.

In the midst of this general rejoicing I had myself the pleasure of meeting the Emperor on one of the quays of the Neva, soon after my arrival. He was on horseback; although Paul's law was abolished, as may be imagined, I had stopped my carriage so as to have the chance of watching Alexander pass by; he came up to me at once, and asked me how I had liked Moscow, and if I had not found the roads very bad, besides several other flattering remarks.

The next day Count Strogonoff came to me from the Emperor, asking me to make a portrait of his bust and one on horseback as well. Barely had this news spread abroad, than I was besieged by people asking me for copies, either of the one on horseback or the bust; it did not matter which, so long as they had Alex-

ander's portrait. At any other period of my existence this circumstance would have been the making of my fortune; but alas! my bodily health, not to mention the mental worries with which I was still tormented, would not permit me to profit by it. Not feeling well enough to commence the full length portrait, I drew in pastels the busts of the Emperor and Empress, as they would aid me afterwards in making larger portraits at Dresden or Berlin, if I should be compelled to leave St. Petersburg; in fact I became very ill, and my doctor told me I ought to drink the Carlsbad waters for my complaint. As soon as I had decided on my departure, I begged an audience of the Empress, which was at once accorded, and I went to see her, the Emperor also being present. I told their Majesties how deeply and sincerely I regretted that my health obliged me to leave to go to Carlsbad, whereupon the Emperor replied most cordially: "Do not go. You seek a remedy which is a

long way off; I will give you the Empress's horse, and when you have had a few rides, you will be quite well again." I thanked him a hundred times for this offer, but confessed I did not know how to ride. "Well," said he, "I will give you a groom to conduct you!" I felt inexpressibly touched by such great kindness, and when I took my leave of their Majesties I could not find terms sufficient to express my gratitude.

Neither these two Sovereigns, or the people who showed such a flattering interest in me during my stay at St. Petersburg and my departure, ever knew with what grief I left that city. When I passed the Russian frontier, I burst into tears, and made up my mind to revisit those who had for so long shown me every mark of friendliness and affection; but it was my destiny, or fate, never to see again the land which I still consider as my second country.

CHAPTER XIII.

Narva—Berlin—M. Ranspach—The Queen of Prussia—Her Family—The Peacock's Island—General Bournonville.

I QUITTED St. Petersburg feeling ill and sad. I was alone in my carriage, for I had been obliged to part with my maid, a Russian, so I took with me only a very old man who wished to go to Prussia, and whom out of pity I had engaged as a domestic, a circumstance I speedily repented of, for this man got so drunk at every post-house that he had to be carried back to his seat. M. de Rivière, who accompanied me in his carriage, was

not of much assistance, especially after we had passed the Russian frontier and reached the sandy districts; for his postillions would insist on taking him along all the by-roads whilst I followed the grand route.

My first stoppage was at Narva, an ugly and badly paved little town, very well fortified, the women wore antiqûe costumes and were handsome—as a rule Livonians are very good looking; nearly all the old men reminded me of Raffaelle's pictures, and the younger ones, with their flowing hair, might have stood for models to that great master.

The day after my arrival I visited a splendid water-fall at some distance from the town; whilst I was gazing at this beautiful spectacle, several of the inhabitants of Narva who had been watching me drawing told me of a fearful scene which they had witnessed.

The waters of the cascades having overflowed, owing to the heavy rains, washed away some of the land on one side with a house containing a large family. They

could hear the shrieks of these unfortunates and watch their despair without being able to succour them, as no boat could cross the torrent, and at last a more horrible sight followed when the house and all its inmates disappeared into the gulf before the eyes of those who told me the tale.

I reached Riga afterwards; this town was neither pretty nor well paved, but was very commercial and had a fine port. Most of the men were dressed either as Turks or Poles, and all the women not belonging to the lower orders wore, when out of doors, a black gauze veil on their heads. I had no time to make other observations, for I was in a hurry to reach Mittau where I hoped to find the royal family; but I had the disappointment of arriving too late and not seeing them, so that my stay in that town was of short duration.

The state of my health and mind has such a great influence on surrounding objects, that I remembered more than once with what pleasure I had traversed, in

going to St. Petersburg, the road I was passing so sadly then. In those days Courland had enchanted me, the magnificent oak forests, lakes and lovely hills and valleys had been peopled in my happy imagination with thousands of smiling and poetical ideas. But on my return all was changed, my sadness and sufferings destroyed it entirely, and I barely glanced at the beautiful scenery.

At Königsberg I took the regular postal conveyance to Berlin, which I reached towards the end of July, 1801, at ten in the evening, but notwithstanding my need of repose I had to undergo the torments of the custom-house. They made me stop in a dark vaulted room for over two hours; the customs officials wished to keep my carriage and inspect it that night, which would have obliged me to walk in a drenching rain to the inn. They would not even allow me to take out my night-cap and some medicine bottles, but finally I obtained permission to leave the place in my carriage, and I drove to the hotel 'Ville de

Paris, with one of the officials, a regular demon, who was quite drunk all the time. He untied my parcels, and tumbled everything upside down, carrying off a piece of Indian muslin which had been given me by Madame du Barri, when I left Paris. The next day I sent early for M. Ranspach, my banker, who settled all my grievances; and made them restore me my piece of muslin without having anything to pay, and the head of the custom-house made me many apologies for what had happened. M. Ranspach was most kind, I dined with him some days later and met several of his compatriots, who combined with much learning the merit of not being pedantic, and whose conversation interested me extremely.

Three days sufficed to restore me from my fatigues, and I felt much better, when the Queen of Prussia, who was not at Berlin, had the goodness to ask me to visit her at Potsdam, were she wished me to take her portrait.

I left; but here my pen is powerless to

describe the impression made on me by this Princess. The charm of her lovely face with its fine and regular features; her beautiful figure, neck, and arms, and the dazzling whiteness of her complexion, everything about her surpassed my expectations. She was clad in deep mourning, with a head-dress of wheat-ears in black jet, which added still more to the brilliancy of her skin. She decided on the day for her first sitting.

"I cannot give you one before twelve," she said, "for the King reviews his troops every day at ten and likes me to be present."

She offered me an apartment in the castle, but knowing that in accepting it I should inconvenience one of her ladies, I thanked her, and lodged in a furnished hotel where I was very uncomfortable.

My sojourn at Potsdam was very enjoyable. The more I saw of this charming Queen the more pleasure I felt in approaching her. She expressed a desire to see the studies I had made of the Emperor Alex-

ander and the Empress Elizabeth, and was much satisfied with them; she was so amiable and kind that the attachment I felt for her amounted almost to love.

I take pleasure in recalling all the marks of gracious attention which Her Majesty was pleased to show me, even in small matters: for example, I had coffee every morning in my hotel which was always detestable; I happened somehow to mention this to the Queen, who sent me some excellent coffee the next day. Another time I was admiring her bracelets which were of an antique design, she immediately took them off and put them on my arms; this gift affected me more than a fortune would have done, and these bracelets have travelled with me ever since.

During one of my sittings the Queen had her children brought in for me to see; to my great surprise they were quite ugly: on showing them to me, she said:

"They are not handsome."

I confess I had not the face to deny the fact; I contented myself with saying

that they were very characteristic looking.*

I had often spoken to the Queen about my love for the country; she wished me to see her Isle of Peacocks. One of her carriages drove me over. This charming retreat is reached by a road through a thick pine forest, then it descends a steep hill which takes you to a lake, on which is situated the Island of Peacocks, with its little castle; it was dull rainy weather, but I was enchanted with this spot.

Besides the two studies in pastels ordered by Her Majesty, I did in the same way those of Prince Ferdinand's family.† One of the young Princesses, Princess Louise, who married Prince Radzivill, was pretty and very agreeable, her husband was an excellent musician. I remember one day he caused me a great surprise, solely owing to the different customs of the country: during

* These children improved afterwards. The Princess, who became Empress of Russia, in particular.—(*Author's Note.*)

† I copied all these pastels in oils later, shortly after my arrival in Paris.

my stay at Berlin I was taken to a large public concert, and I was astonished on entering the room to see Prince Radzivill playing on a harp. Such a thing could never take place in my country, an amateur, and above all a Prince, can never play before any but his own circle of friends; but in Prussia it seemed quite natural.

It was in Berlin that I made the acquaintance with the Baronne de Krudener, well known for her wit and eccentricity. Her reputation as an author was already made; but she had not assumed the character of a religious enthusiast which caused her to be so celebrated in the north; she and her husband were very kind to me. I can say the same of Madame de Souza, the Portugese ambassadress, whose portrait I painted. I encountered many of my acquaintances besides; amongst others, I met with pleasure Count and Countess Golovin whom I had known in St Petersburg. Madame Chevalier, the charming actress, also came to Berlin. She was very rich, and I heard that after being divorced she

had married a young man attached to the French Legation.

On my arrival in Berlin I had paid a visit to General Bournonville, the French Ambassador, for I entertained a great desire to return to Paris. My friends and my brother, in particular, were anxious for me to do so; it had been easy for them to get me struck off the list of *émigrés*, and I was re-established in my quality of French woman, to which in spite of all I still clung in my heart.

General Bournonville was a brave and honest soldier, much esteemed at Berlin; he received me very kindly, and advised me to go back to my country, assuring me that peace and order were completely re-established.

Although General Bournonville was the first Republican Ambassador I had visited, I had met others before, towards the end of my stay in St. Petersburg. General Duroc and Monsieur de Chateau-Giron had reached Alexander's Court, being sent by Bonaparte; and I remember, being at the time with the

Empress Elizabeth, hearing them say to the Emperor, "When shall we receive the citoyens?" Monsieur de Chateau-Giron paid me a visit. I received him as well as I could, but I cannot describe the effect made on me by the tri-coloured cocade. A few days later, they dined with the Princess Galitzin Beauris. I was seated near General Duroc, who, I was told, was an intimate friend of Bonaparte. He never spoke a word to me, and I did the same by him.

The dinner of which I am writing gave rise to an amusing incident. The Princess's cook, being in complete ignorance of the French Revolution, naturally thought these gentlemen were the Ambassadors of the King of France. Wishing to do them every honour, he thought over several things, and, remembering that the Fleur-de-lis were the French arms, he hastened to make everything, the truffles, cutlets, and patties, all in that design. This surprise alarmed the guests so much, that the Princess, fearful of being accused of a somewhat doubtful joke, ordered the head-cook to come up-stairs, and

asked him the reason of this shower of fleurs-de-lis. The worthy man replied, in a very pleased manner, "I wished your Excellency to see that I knew what ought to be done on great occasions." A very witty woman whispered to me. "What a misfortune that the cooks and scullions ever knew any more than he does!"

A few days before my departure from Berlin, the Director of the Academy of Painting came most corteously and brought me himself the diploma of my reception by this Academy.

All the many kindnesses I received at the Prussian Court ought to have prolonged my stay, and would have done so, had not my plans been quite decided on. I took leave of the charming and beautiful young Queen. I did not think that very few years after I should have the sorrow of hearing she was dead. I did not imagine that an infamous calumny would be added to the losses by war, which would lead her to the tomb in the flower of her youth!

I never read the bulletins issued by Napoleon's army in those days without feeling overcome with indignation. I remember meeting at that time in Paris, in the Opera, when I was with the Comtesse Potocka, a Pole, who came from the French Army. I asked him about the shameful lies which were spread about concerning the *liaison* of the Prussian Queen with the Emperor Alexander. The young man replied: "Nothing could be more false; it is all invented to enliven the bulletins."

And yet the poor woman, the victim of these reports, read these calumnies, and the sorrow they occasioned her, added to other griefs, hastened her death most probably.

CHAPTER XIV.

I leave Berlin—Dresden—Letter to my Brother—Frankfort—The Divoff Family—I return to France.

I FEARED on leaving Berlin that I had lost all my possessions in the following manner :—I had ordered my horses for five o'clock in the morning. My servant had, apparently, gone to say good-bye to some of his friends, and was no where to be found, and in Prussia the horses never wait. I had risen, still stupified with sleep, and the servant of the hotel, not seeing my own man about, took possession of my dressing-case to send down with the rest of my luggage. This dressing-case,

which contained my diamonds, my money—all my fortune, in fact—was always placed under my feet when I travelled. By the greatest good-luck, as soon as I was seated in the carriage, I perceived, though still half asleep, that my feet were not supported as usual. The horses started. I cried out to stop them, and asked for my dressing-case from the hotel servant, taking care to speak loudly enough to arouse the mistress of the house. This succeeded, for after some evasive replies from the man, my dressing-case was brought me. It was discovered in a stable at the back and covered with hay. This circumstance had given time for my servant to arrive, and I left, very happy, as may be supposed, to have recovered at the same time both my servant and dressing-case. I mention this adventure, as I think it may serve as a lesson to travellers.

On leaving Berlin, I went to Dresden, where I was compelled to remain, in order to make several copies of the portrait of the Emperor Alexander which I had promised. I intended afterwards to continue my journey

to France, without stopping any length of time on the road. The following letter, which I wrote when at Dresden to my brother, will give some idea of what I felt at the time :—

"Dresden, September 18th, 1801.

"It is ages, my good friend, since I wrote to you, but I have always been on the move, without finding a nice corner where I could settle myself a little comfortably, and commence making copies of the portrait of the Emperor Alexander. I received your note by good Père Rivière. The longing you have to see me is only equal to my own, but, my dear friend, I cannot conceal from you the dread I feel in returning to Paris. The remembrance of the horrors that have passed there are so vividly before my eyes, that I fear to revisit the places which have been witness of such frightful scenes. I should wish to have been blind or to have drunk of the waters of oblivion, in order to live on that blood-stained soil.

"On the other hand, when I think of the

happiness it will be to embrace you again, to meet old friends who are still left to me, I no longer hesitate, and I say to myself that I will return. Yes, my friend, I shall go to meet you all again; but, alas! I shall not meet our poor mother. That sorrow is the deepest of all others. You will take me to see her grave. . . . My God! how sad are my thoughts!

"Since leaving Russia, I have been invited to visit Vienna, Brunswick, Munich, and London, without speaking of St. Petersburg, who clamours to have me back again. I have been received in the most flattering manner at all places. Everywhere I have found a country, with this difference, that calumny has not torn me to pieces, as in France. You know what that viper has made me suffer! All my persecutors are still there; suppose I should again fall into their envenomed clutches! . . . .

"I will ask you to send me an itinerary of my journey, and, above all, say if I shall be allowed to come and go as I like, for, after passing the winter with you, I should wish to

make another journey. Travelling and change of air agrees with me. To live in a city would kill me.

"I found the beautiful and amiable Princesse Dolgorouki here. Monsieur Demidoff also, who seems heartily tired of this place. He said to me the other day, 'What a dismal city this Dresden is! I have done my best, but cannot find out how to spend a thousand crowns a day.'

"Kind Monsieur Laya will take this letter to you. I made his acquaintance here, and he pleased me at once. He is a distinguished man of letters, and the most good-natured person in the world. Knowing him to be a friend of your's prepossessed me in his favour; and the more I know of him, the greater is my regard. I should much like to know Monsieur Legouvé, of whom you speak. His writings have made me like him, and I hope you will introduce him to me on my arrival.

"Adieu! My best love to yourself and Suzette, without forgetting my little niece, whom I love as a daughter. Remember

me to good Madame Verdun. How pleased I shall be to see her again, as also Robert Ménageot, the Brongniart family, &c. These are my subjects of consolation, and they are very necessary. Adieu!"

My resolution once formed of returning to France for the winter, I hastened my work, so as to be able to spend a few days with the Rivière family at Brunswick. I met whilst with them the Duc de Brunswick, who desired my acquaintance. I was presented to him, and he at once expressed a wish that I should make his portrait. As my time was so limited, I was compelled to decline, with much regret, as this Prince was very handsome. After staying five or six days with Monsieur de Rivière's relations, I started on my journey alone, my travelling companion remaining with his family.

I remained one night at Weimar, and the day which preceded it, was full of tribulations, I had hoped to have reached Weimar about noon, and had therefore taken no precautions as regarded my

dinner. But unfortunately I had a driver who did not know the road, and who instead of taking a good one, lost himself and me in rich pasture lands where we passed the whole day. By nightfall I was almost dead with hunger and fatigue. The horses, worn out, could no longer draw the carriage which was very heavy, and to complete my trouble my servant was suffering from a whitlow on his finger, which prevented him from helping us. I remember that in the endeavour to allay my impatience and above all my appetite, I amused myself by trying to model a face out of some of the horrid soil in which we were stuck, and succeeded fairly well in doing so. We at last, and with difficulty, got out of this tiresome position, and reached Weimar at midnight, so worn out and bewildered that all along the road I had given at the toll bars two ducats instead of two grutz.* I only found out my mistake at the door of

* A ducat is worth twelve francs, and a grutz worth two sous.

the hotel, on paying the last post, and I sent back for my two last ducats which were returned to me.

I had been travelling since eleven o'clock in the morning, without having eaten anything, and had to wait a long while before getting into the hotel, as every one goes to bed at an early hour at Weimar, and no one was up.

I had several letters of introduction from the Court of Vienna; but I was so tired and ill, and was so uncomfortable at the hotel, that I left on the following morning. At Gotha, which was my next halting place, I found the Baron de Grimm, whom I had known previously in Paris; he was most obliging and kind to me, and arranged my money matters, which the change of country necessitated.

At Frankfort I put up at a fine hotel, which bore the name of France and Paris. I had left my drunken old servant at Berlin, as he had been such a trouble to me; and when I got out of my carriage, a very well dressed young German, who was standing

at the door, offered to carry my dressing case upstairs for me. He placed it on the table in the room I was to occupy, and as naturally I had followed him, he wanted to kiss my hand, which I refused as politely as I could, at the same time thanking him for his attentions. I locked the door after him, for the face of the young man displeased me, and made me suspect him.

A few minutes afterwards, I heard a carriage stop before the hotel. I went to the window, and saw my good friend Madame Divoff, her husband and son, whom I had known so well at St. Petersburg, descend. I ran to welcome this excellent family, and there again was the young German helping the servants to carry their luggage into their rooms. So much zeal appeared suspicious to my mind; but Madame Divoff, grateful for his attention, invited the young man to sup with us. At table, he told us his misfortunes relative to a love match which had been broken off. It was quite a romance, and I was so strongly

persuaded that he had invented it, that I could not feel the least interested in it, though Madame Divoff was so overcome as to shed tears. The following morning, she invited the young romancer to breakfast, which I did not at all approve of. We were obliged to remain six days at Frankfort, which was very annoying; but a false report was circulated that Bonaparte had been assassinated, and in such a case, all my plans for returning to Paris would have been changed. At last, when we were on the point of starting, several silver dishes belonging to Madame Divoff were missing. I never for a moment doubted they had been stolen by the young German, and immediately after my arrival at Paris, I read in the newspapers that the young man had been arrested for theft.

I will not attempt to describe the state of my feelings on again, touching after twelve years, French soil; the terror, the sorrow, and the joy which agitated my mind in turn. I wept for friends who had died on the scaffold; but I was going to see others who

still remained to me. This France into which I was entering had been the theatre of atrocious crimes; but this France was my country!

CHAPTER XV.

I arrive in Paris—Concert in the Rue Cléry—Ball at Madame Régnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angely—Madame Bonaparte—Vien—Gérard—Madame Récamier—Madame Tallien—Ducis—My Soirées—I leave for London.

ON my arrival at my house in Paris, in the Rue du Gros-Chenet, M. Le Brun, my brother, his wife and daughter, were waiting at the entrance door to receive me, weeping for joy at seeing me again, and I also was much overcome. I found the staircase filled with flowers, and my own rooms charmingly arranged. The hangings and window curtains of my bedroom were in green cashmere, the curtains

being edged with gold coloured embroidery. M. Le Brun had placed a crown of gold stars as an ornament for the head of my bed; all the furniture was in good taste, and I found myself very comfortably installed. Though M. Le Brun made me pay very dearly for all this luxury, I was not the less sensible of the trouble he had taken to make my house agreeable to me.

The house in the Rue du Gros-Chenet was separated by a garden from a house which looked into the Rue de Cléry, and which also belonged to M. Le Brun. In this house was an immense reception room in which first rate concerts were held. They took me to one on the night of my arrival, and as soon as I entered the room, everyone turned towards me, the audience clapping their hands. I was so surprised by this flattering reception that I burst into tears. I remember that Madame Tallien was present at this concert, radiant with beauty.

The first visit I received the following

morning, was that of Greuze, whom I did not find changed. I was touched by his friendliness, and very glad to see him again. After Greuze, came my good friend Madame de Bonneuil, as pretty as ever; for the way this charming woman carried her age was quite astonishing. She told me that her daughter, Madame Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angély was giving a ball on the following day, and that I must positively go to it.

"But," I replied, "I have no handsome dress to wear," and then I showed her the famous piece of embroidered India muslin which had travelled about with me so much, and had run so many risks since the time Madame du Barri had given it me. Madame de Bonneuil thought it very beautiful, and sent it to Madame Germain, the celebrated dressmaker, who made me at once a fashionable dress, and sent it in time for the ball.

I met there the most beautiful women of the period, at the head of whom, I must place Madame Regnault herself, then

Madame Visconti, so remarkable for the beauty of her figure and face. Whilst I was engaged in looking at all these charming women, a lady who was seated in front of me, turned round, and I could not help saying:

"Ah! Madame, how lovely you are!"

This lady was Madame Jouberto, then very poor, and who has since married Lucien Bonaparte.

There were present at this ball, many French Generals; Macdonald, Marmont, and several others; in fact it was a new world to me.

A few days after my arrival, Madame Bonaparte came one morning to see me; she brought to my recollection the balls we had been to together before the revolution, and which I had quite forgotten; but I was very grateful for her kindness. She invited me to breakfast with the First Consul.

Ménageot soon called, he had been Director of the Academy of French painters in Rome, and related to me his

reason for leaving Rome, in the revolt of the students. He also told me how he had seen Bonaparte at Lodi, after his great victory. Bonaparte, on showing him the field of battle still strewn with dead, said to him with the greatest sang-froid :

" This would make a fine picture."

Ménageot was indignant with this remark. " It was," he said, " a frightful heart breaking sight; there were several dogs who were howling over the corpses of their masters; these poor animals were much more humane than Bonaparte!"

I was greatly touched at the joy expressed by my friends and acquaintances at seeing me again, though my pleasure was sadly troubled at hearing of so many deaths, of which I was ignorant; for there was scarcely anyone who called who had not lost either a mother, husband, or some relative. I had one very disagreeable visit to pay, and which vexed me more than any other: this was to my odious step-father; he lived at Neuilly in a small house which had been bought by my father, and where I

had spent many of my youthful days. Everything in this place recalled my poor mother, and the happy time I passed with her; I found there her work-basket just as she had left it; it was a sad and mournful visit.

One can imagine with what delight I visited the Museum of the Louvre, which possessed so many splendid works of art; I went there alone, so that I might enjoy it without anything to distract me. I first visited the pictures, then the statues; and when after having remained several hours standing, I began to think of returning home for my dinner, I perceived that the guardians had locked up the doors and gone away. I ran right and left; I cried; it was impossible to make myself heard; I was dying of cold and hunger, for it was in the month of February. I could not knock at the windows, they were much too high up; thus I found myself in prison with all these fine statues, which I no longer was in any disposition to admire. They appeared like so many phantoms, and the idea that I should

have to pass the night with them, filled me with terror and despair. At last I discovered a little door, at which I knocked so loudly that some one heard me and opened it; I ran out precipitately, delighted to regain my liberty.

Shortly after my arrival in Paris, I received the following letter from the Comédie Française:

"Madame,

"The Comédie Française has done me the honour to request me to forward you a copy of the decree just passed, for placing your name on the list of free entries for that theatre; you are requested to accept this hommage as a mark of admiration and esteem for your rare talents.

"I have the honour, &c.

"MAIGNIEU, *Secretary.*"

On my first visit to the theatre the general aspect appeared very dull, accustomed as I had been in former years in France, and also in foreign countries, to

see everyone wearing powder, the black heads, and black coats of the men formed a gloomy *coup-d'œil.* One might have concluded that the public were assembled to follow a funeral procession.

The appearance of Paris also did not appear so gay; the streets seemed narrower. This was caused, no doubt, by my recent visit to St. Petersburg and Berlin, where the streets are wide and spacious. But what displeased me more than anything else, was to see written on the walls: *liberté, fraternité, ou la mort.* These words raised in my mind many sad reflections on the past, and filled me with fears for the future.

I was taken to see a grand parade held by the First Consul on the Place du Louvre. I was stationed at a window of the Museum, and I remember that I could not be made to recognise as Bonaparte, the little slight man who was pointed out to me as him The Duc de Crillon, who was by my side, had all the trouble in the world to make me believe it.

As in the case of the Empress Catherine II. I had imagined this celebrated man to be a sort of colossus. Shortly after my arrival, Bonaparte's brothers came to see my paintings; they were very amiable, and said many flattering things to me; Lucien, in particular, was greatly struck by my Sybil, and praised it highly.

My first visits were to my kind old friends, the Marquise de Grollier and Madame de Verdun, also to the Comtesse d'Andelau, a most charming woman: her two daughters, Madame de Rosambo, and Madame d'Orglande were worthy of their mother by their beauty and intelligence.

I also called on the Comtesse de Ségur, whom I found alone and very sad; her husband had as yet no appointment, and they were badly off. Later on, when Bonaparte became Emperor, he made the Comte de Ségur master of the ceremonies, which relieved them at once from their difficulties. One evening, at about eight o'clock, I went to see the Comtesse, and finding her quite

alone, she said: "You will hardly believe that I have had twenty people to dinner? they all left after the coffee." I was much surprised; for before the Revolution, the greater number of guests who had dined with her finished the evening at her house, which I thought a much better arrangement than the present fashion.

Madame de Ségur invited me to a grand musical soirée, where were gathered together all the most notable people of the day. I remarked another innovation, which I thought was equally bad. I was astonished on entering to see all the men on one side, and all the women on the other; you might have supposed they were enemies in view of each other. Not a man came to our side, with the exception of the master of the house, the Comte de Ségur, whose ancient habit of courtesy made him say a few flattering things to the ladies. As soon as the beautiful Madame de Canisy arrived, we lost our only cavalier; the Comte at once

devoting all his attentions to this beauty, to whom at this time I am informed the Emperor was paying his court.

I found myself seated by the side of Madame de Bassano, whom I had heard much praised, and whom I had greatly desired to see. She appeared to pay great attention to the diamond bracelet given me by the Queen of Naples on my taking leave of her. This was in fact very handsome. As I suppose she considered me a nobody, not being the wife of a minister or belonging to the Court, she did not vouchsafe me a word, which did not prevent my looking at her often, and thinking her very pretty.

The first artist on whom I called was M. Vien, who had been appointed in the old times as first painter to the King, and whom Bonaparte had made a senator. I was greatly pleased with the reception he gave me, and for his extreme kindness. He was then eighty-two years of age, nevertheless, he showed me two sketches composed in the style of the

antique bacchanals which he had just painted. They were charming.

After this visit I called on M. Gérard, already so celebrated by his pictures of Belisarius, and of Psyche. I had the greatest desire to become acquainted with this splendid artist, whose quality of mind equalled his rare talent. I found him worthy of his fame. He had just finished painting the fine portrait of Madame Bonaparte, mother of the Emperor Napoleon I., she is depicted reclining on a sofa, and this picture added still more to his reputation.

The portrait of Madame Bonaparte gave me the wish to see the one Gérard had made of Madame Récamier; accordingly I called on this lovely woman, charmed by a circumstance which procured me the pleasure of seeing and making acquaintance with her.

Shortly after this, she invited me to a grand ball, to which I went with the Princesse Dolgorouki, who I had the happiness of seeing in Paris. This ball was

charming; nothing was wanting, numbers of people without any crowding, many beautiful women, and a handsome house. As the Peace of Amiens had just been declared, I met at this *réunion* a certain air of magnificence that the rising generation had not hitherto known. It was the first time that men and women of twenty saw liveries amongst the servants in the anti-chambers of Ambassadors; foreigners of rank, richly dressed and decorated with brilliant orders; and whatever may be said, this display was more suitable at a ball than the carmagnole and breeches of the Revolutionary period.

Madame Récamier had only one woman in Paris who rivalled her in beauty. This was Madame Tallien.* Robert, who knew her well, took me to see her, and I must own that I sought in vain for a defect in the whole appearance of this charming per-

* The Baron Gérard made a fine portrait of Madame Thérèse Cabarrus, wife of Devin de Fontenay, afterwards wife of Tallien, and later wife of Comte Caraman, Prince de Chimay.

son. She was both beautiful and pretty, for the regularity of her features did not detract from her expression. She had an enchanting smile, and was admirably proportioned.

Madame Tallien combined with her beauty a noble disposition. It is well known that during the Revolution a number of victims, doomed to death, owed their lives to the empire she exercised over Tallien. These unfortunate people named her *Notre Dame de Bon Secours.* She received me in the most graceful manner. Later, when she had married the Prince de Chimay, she lived at the end of the Rue de Babylone in a handsome house, where she and her husband often amused themselves by private theatricals. Both of them acted well. She invited me to one of these entertainments, and came several times to my *soirées.*

I was not long in Paris before I made several new acquaintances, who in time became friends. I had the happiness of being a near neighbour of the Marquise d'Hautpoul, who, by her character and amiable dis-

position, soon made me love her. I also became acquainted with Madame de Bawr, who had recently married a Russian officer, son of a celebrated General of that name. She was very young, and had not as yet distinguished herself in a literary capacity, as she afterwards did, on losing her husband and her fortune.

I had the happiness at this period of meeting Ducis, whose noble character equalled his rare talent. The extreme simplicity of his manners contrasted so well with the brilliant imagination with which he was endowed, that I have never known a more interesting man than the excellent Ducis. His friends had but one regret, and that was that it was impossible to keep him in Paris. He hated towns, and the country, with its fields and shepherds, were necessary to the author of "Œdipus" and "Othello."

The solitary life which it pleased him to lead was the cause of a great surprise and even fear to myself, and I have never forgotten it. On my return from London I went to see him at Versailles, where I heard

he had settled. It was evening. I knocked at his door, and Madame Peyre, the widow of the architect, whom I had believed dead some years, opened it to me, holding a candle in her hand. I cried out with fright, and gazed at her in a terrified manner, whilst she told me that she had quite recently married Ducis. She took me to her husband, whom I found seated in a small room, surrounded by books and manuscripts.

I had great pleasure in again meeting Madame Campan. She held a high position in the Bonaparte family, and invited me to dine with her one day at Saint-Germain, where she had established her school. I found myself at table with Madame Murat, the sister of Napoleon, but we were placed in such a manner that I could only see her profile, as she did not turn her face towards me. I judged, however, that she was pretty. In the evening, the young school-girls performed "Esther," and Mademoiselle Augué, who since married Marshal Ney, acted the principal part very well. Bonaparte was

present during the performance. He was seated in the front row; I placed myself in the second in a corner a little distance from him, so that I might examine him at my leisure.

I remarked with pleasure in Madame Campan's room a bust of Marie-Antoinette. I told her how pleased I was to see it there, and she said Bonaparte approved of it, which I thought was nice of him. It is true that at this period he seemed to fear neither the past nor the future. His victories excited the enthusiasm of the French, and even that of foreigners. He had many admirers amongst the English, and I recollect once, when dining at the Duchess of Gordon's, she showed me the portrait of Bonaparte, saying, "Voilà mon zéro!" As she spoke French very badly, I understood what she wished to say, and we laughed heartily when I explained what a *zéro* was.

The great number of foreigners of my acquaintance who were at this period in Paris, and the necessity I felt to try and

drive away the melancholy which I could not overcome, induced me to give *soirées*. As the Princesse Dolgorouki was very anxious to become acquainted with the Abbé Delille, I invited him to supper with me, at the same time asking several other persons worthy of listening to him. Though this charming poet had become blind, he had lost none of the amiable gaiety of his character. He recited several of his finest verses, which enchanted us all.

After this supper, I gave several others. I collected at one of them all the principal artists of the period, and we were as gay as before the Revolution. At dessert each person was obliged to sing a song. Gérard chose the air of "Marlborough," but, to tell the truth, his singing was not as perfect as his painting, for he sang false, and we laughed at him.

On another occasion, I arranged a supper for all the great personages of the time and the Ambassadors, amongst whom was Monsieur de Metternich. Then I gave a ball, at which Madame de Hamelin, Monsieur

de Trenis, and others danced, for it was then the fashion to dance as well at private parties as at the Opera. Madame Hamelin was considered the best dancer in Paris. I remember that at this ball Madame Demidoff danced what was called the Russian valse in such an elegant manner, that people stood up on the benches to see her.

I was anxious, by these parties, to return in some measure to the Russians and Germans, who were in Paris, some of the pleasures they had procured for me whilst staying in their country. I saw nearly every day the Princess Dolgorouki, who had been so kind to me at St. Petersburg. She liked Paris, and soon formed a pleasant society around her. I remember at one of her soirées meeting the Vicomte de Ségur, whom I had known before the revolution. He was then young and elegant, making a thousand conquests by the charm of his face. On seeing him again at the Princess's with withered face, wrinkled, and wearing a wig with symmetrical curls on each side, leaving the forehead bare, I said to myself:

"Alas! what are we coming to?"

The Princesse Dolgorouki came to see me the day she had been presented to Bonaparte. I asked her what she thought of the Court of the First Consul.

"It is not a court," she replied, "but a power."

It must have appeared as such to her, accustomed as she was to the Court of St. Petersburg, which was numerous and brilliant, whilst at the Tuileries, she would see very few women, but a prodigious number of military of all ranks.

In the midst of the distractions which a residence in Paris offered me, I was not the less haunted by the most gloomy thoughts, which I could by no means get rid of. I felt an ardent desire to live alone, and took a small house at Meudon, which had once been occupied by nuns. It was situated in the wood, and its rustic and solitary aspect made me fancy myself a thousand miles from Paris. This suited me admirably; for my melancholy was so

great that I could not endure to see anyone; whenever I heard a carriage I fled into the woods of Meudon.

The first visits I received there were those of the Duchesse de Fleury and Madame de Bellegarde, who lived together in a house in the environs. They invited me to go and see them, and were so amiable that they at last reconciled me to humanity, and succeeded in dissipating my melancholy. In the autumn I returned to Paris, where all my gloomy ideas speedily came back. To put a stop to such a state of mind I resolved on taking a journey, and never having visited London, decided on going there.

CHAPTER XVI.

London—The Route—West—Reynolds—Mrs. Siddons—Mrs. Billington—Madame Grassini—Duchess of Devonshire—Sir Francis Burdett.

I LEFT for London on the 15th of April, 1802. I did not know a word of English. I had provided myself with an English maid, but was soon obliged to get rid of her, as she was very inefficient, and spent the greater part of each day in eating slices of bread and butter. Happily I brought with me a charming young person as a companion and friend. This was my good Adelaide,*

* Mademoiselle Adelaide married afterwards M. Constant, Madame Vigée Le Brun's man of business.

whose constant care and counsel have been so useful to me.

On landing at Dover, I was rather alarmed at seeing the population assembled on the shore; but became reassured on being told that the crowd was composed of the inhabitants who invariably came to see the passengers land. The sun was setting, and I at once engaged a carriage with three horses, and started without delay; for I was not without some anxiety, as I had been informed I might possibly meet highwaymen on the road. I had taken the precaution of putting my diamonds inside my stockings, and I was very glad I had done so, on perceiving two men on horseback galloping towards us who, to complete my terror, separated, as I thought with the intention of placing themselves at each side of the carriage-door. I shook with fright; but nothing occurred.

I took up my abcde on arriving in London at the Hotel Brunet, in Leicester Square. I was dreadfully tired, and had

great need of sleep; but I found it impossible, as all night long I heard some one talking and stamping up and down over my head. The cause of this insupportable noise was explained to me the following day. I met on the stairs M. de Parseval de Grandmaison, whom I had been intimately acquainted with in Paris, and was delighted to see him. When he told me he was lodged above me, I at once begged him not to walk about all night, and not to choose that time for reciting his verses, seeing that his voice was so strong and sonorous that it penetrated even to my room. He at once agreed, and from that time I slept tranquilly.

As I had no intention of remaining in the hotel I was then staying at, I profited by the kindness of one of my compatriots, named Charmilly, who came to see me and took me to look at other apartments. I took one in Beck Street, and this reminds me that, on my arrival in London, my ignorance of the English language made me make an amusing mistake. Accustomed

as I had been to read "Rue de Richelieu," "Rue de Cléry," etc., the word "Street" written at the end, appeared to me to be the name, and I said to my servant:

"Here is a street that seems to have no end."

The lodgings which I had taken in Beck Street were so inconvenient, that I could not remain there. First, at the back of the house I looked into the barracks of the Royal Guard, and every morning, between three and four o'clock, I heard a trumpet sounding so loud and out of tune, that it was sufficient to wake the dead. To this noise was added that of the horses of the Guard, whose stables were under my windows, and they prevented my sleeping at night. In the day time I had the noise of my neighbour's children, who were continually running up and down stairs. Their mother having heard that I exhibited my pictures, brought all her numerous family to see them. She made me think of Madame Gigogne, who had so many children she didn't know what to do. I might, it is true,

have taken refuge in a room that was more agreeably situated; but knowing that a lady had recently died there, I had a great repugnance to occupying it. The arms of the deceased were still over the street door; I did not understand this custom, otherwise I should have taken the house. I therefore left Beck Street, and established myself in a fine house in Portman Square. This large square made me hope for a little tranquillity. Before taking it, I had well inspected the back of the house, and the view from the windows betokened complete calm. I slept on that side in consequence. But the following morning, at daybreak, I heard the most piercing cries. I rose, put my head out of window, and perceived an enormous bird belonging to my nearest neighbour. I had never seen anything like it before. It looked furious; its beak and tail were of monstrous length; and I can positively assert that a large eagle, in comparison with it, would have had the appearance of a small canary. I was informed that the horrible creature came

from the East Indies. But wheresoever its origin, I did not hesitate to write and ask its mistress to remove it to the other side of the street. This lady replied that she had had it placed there first, but the police had ordered its removal, as it alarmed the passers-by.

Not being able to get rid of the bird, I should perhaps have got accustomed to the nuisance; but the house had been inhabited previously to my taking it by some Indian Ambassadors, and I was told that these people had buried two of their slaves in my cellar, where they still remained. What with corpses and birds, it was really too much, so I left Portman Square, and established myself in Maddox Street, in an apartment which was frightfully damp, which did not however prevent my remaining there, as I was tired of such constant moving.

Great and beautiful as London is, it offers less resources for an artist than Paris or the Italian cities. It is not that England does not possess many precious works of art, but

the greater number are the property of private individuals, who make them the ornament of their town or country house. At the time of which I speak, London did not possess any museum of pictures, that which exists at the present time being the fruit of legacies and presents made to the nation within the last few years. For want of pictures, I went to see the monuments. I returned several times to Westminster Abbey, where the tombs of the Kings and Queens are superb. I admired, amongst others, that of Mary Stuart, in which the remains of that unfortunate Queen were placed by her son, James I. I stayed a long while in that part of the Abbey consecrated to the great poets, Milton, Shakespeare, Pope, Chatterton. It is well known that the last-named, dying of want, poisoned himself, and I could not help thinking that the money employed on raising his tomb would have sufficed to have procured him a comfortable existence.

St. Paul's Cathedral is also very fine. It is an imitation of the cupola of St. Peter's, at Rome.

I saw at the Tower of London a very curious collection of armour of different centuries. Amongst it were a series of figures of kings on horseback, one of the most remarkable being Elizabeth, ready to review her troops.

The British Museum possesses a collection of minerals, arms and utensils belonging to the savages of the South Sea, and brought to England by the celebrated Captain Cook.

The streets of London are finely proportioned and clean. The large pavements made them very commodious for foot-passengers, also I was much surprised to find myself a witness of scenes that civilisation would appear to prescribe. It was no means rare to see "boxers" fighting in the streets, and covered with blood. Far from this disgusting spectacle appearing to shock the lookers-on, I noticed that they stimulated the combatants by giving them glasses of gin. It was a frightful sight.

The Sundays in London are as dull as the climate. No shops open, no theatres, no balls,

or concerts. A general silence reigns everywhere, and, as on this day no one can work or play on any instrument without running the risk of their windows being broken by the people, you have no other resource for passing the time but the public walks, which are much frequented.

The grand amusements of the best society are parties, which are called "routs." Two or three hundred people walk up and down in the drawing-rooms, the women arm-in-arm with each other, for the men keep themselves apart. In this crowd one is pressed and knocked about continually, so that one becomes dreadfully fatigued; nevertheless there are no seats! At one of these routs I met an Englishman, whom I had known in Italy. He came up to me, and amid the profound silence which always reigns in these assemblies, said, "Are not these parties very amusing?" "You find your amusement in what we should call dulness," I replied. I could not see, in fact, what pleasure there could be in stifling oneself in a crowd which is too great for you to be

able to get near the mistress of the house.

The walks in London are not at all gay; the women all walk together on one side dressed in white. Their silence, their perfect calm might make one fancy they were shadows passing along. The men keep themselves apart from them, and maintain the same serious appearance. I have sometimes met a man and woman walking together arm-in-arm. When I have happened to walk near such a pair, I have amused myself by watching if they spoke to each other. I never heard them utter a word.

The first artist I visited in London was Mr. West, a renowned historical painter; I saw at his house many pictures that he had not quite finished, the composition of which appeared very fine.

I visited nearly all the principal artists, and was extremely surprised to see with all of them a quantity of portraits of which the head alone was finished. I asked them why they sent portraits in this condition to be exhibited; they all replied, that the per-

sons who had sat for them were contented to be seen and named; and besides, the sketch once made, half the price was paid in advance, and the painter was satisfied.

I saw, whilst in London, many of Sir Joshua Reynolds' famous pictures; they are a most excellent colour, and remind one of Titian, but in general are unfinished with the exception of the head. I admired an Infant Samuel of his, which charmed me both for its finish and colour. Reynolds was as modest as he was clever; when my portrait of M. de Calonne arrived at the London custom-house, he went to see it, and this is what I have been told by persons who heard him. When the case was opened he gazed at it for some little time, and inspected it, whereupon some spectator who repeated the idle words of calumny, said:

"This portrait ought to be good, for Madame Le Brun received £3,200 for it."

"Well," replied Reynolds, "if they gave

me £4,000 for it, I could not have done it as well."

The London climate greatly worried this artist, as it is so unfavourable for drying the paint, and he had tried mixing wax with his paints, but this he found deadened them.

When going to a painter's house in England to see his pictures, it is the custom to pay a certain sum before entering the studio, and in general it is the painter himself who benefits by the money given to the servants. My domestic was the only one who profited by it; this good fellow gave me all his savings to keep for him, and at last I had sixty guineas, which he had received from people who came to see my pictures. The celebrated Fox came several times, and paid the customary fee on each occasion; I was very sorry never to have been at home to receive him, for I had a great desire to see this great politician. I was more fortunate with Mrs. Siddons, whose visit I did not lose; I had seen this celebrated actress for the first time in the "Gambler," and I

cannot express the gratification I experienced. I do not believe it possible for anyone to possess greater talent than Mrs. Siddons for the stage; all the English were unanimous in praising her perfect and natural style. The tone of her voice was enchanting; that of Mademoiselle Mars alone at all resembling it, and what constituted to my mind the great tragedian, was her very silence, so admirable in expression.

Happily the day on which I received Mrs. Siddons was not one of those when I did not expect visitors, and in consequence I was not caught in one of my fits of abstraction, which were often laughable. Here is an instance: I only received on Sunday mornings the people who came to see my paintings; the other days, I was constantly painting in my studio, in a very careless costume; but two English ladies who were leaving that week, having begged me to receive them before their departure, I fixed Thursday. The day came, and whilst waiting for them, began to paint; my good

Adelaide hearing that I expected ladies who dressed elegantly, told me that I must not be seen in my painting dress, spotted all over with colour, and with a night-cap on my head. I consented, and in consequence put on under my smock-frock a charming white dress, and Adelaide brought me my pretty little *wig à l'antique*, as worn at that time, recommending me that as soon as I heard a knock at the street-door to take off my night-cap and smock, and to put on my wig. Occupied by my work, I heard no knock; but heard the ladies coming up the stairs. I quickly seized my wig and popped it on over my night-cap, and I quite forgot to take off my smock. I noticed at once that the English ladies looked at me in a curious manner, without my being able to imagine the reason; at last, after they had left, Adelaide came in, and seeing me attired in this fashion, she was quite angry, and said:

"Just go and look at yourself in the glass!"

I then perceived that the frill of my cap

came out from under my wig, and that I had kept on my smock; Adelaide was furious, and she was right, for these ladies must have thought me crazy, and I wish that what I have just written may one day come under their notice.

Though my rooms in Maddox Street were decidedly damp, they were large and convenient for receptions, so that I was able to give many grand *soirées;* one amongst others which was very brilliant, where the two best singers of the London opera, Mrs. Billington and Madame Grassini, sang two duets together with rare perfection; Viotti played the violin and charmed everyone. The Prince of Wales, who was present at my concert, said to me most graciously:

"I take a passing look at all the *soirées*, but, here, I remain."

I presented Madame Grassini to all the great ladies I had invited; for she was much sought after in London, which was very natural, seeing that she joined to her beauty and talent a most amiable disposition; her voice was low, called a contralto, which is

very rare and greatly esteemed in Italy, whilst Mrs. Billington's was a soprano; but both of them sometimes encroached on the domain of her rival, which was not an advantage to either. I remember one day being present at an opera in which both Mrs. Billington and Madame Grassini sang, and that the latter sang some very high notes. The director came into my box, and said in a furious manner:

"You see what is happening; well! it does not astonish me, for when I went this morning to see these ladies, I found Mrs. Billington singing her part in the bass, and Madame Grassini in the treble; this is what enrages me."

Concerts were very fashionable in London, and I much preferred them to the *routs*, though these to a foreigner offered the best means of meeting the highest classes of society. Invitations are not sent by letter as in France; only a card on which is written: *at home on such a day.*

Lady Hertford, who was a very handsome woman, gave superb *routs*. I frequently

met Lady Monck with her two daughters at Lady Hertford's; also Lord Barrington, who was a great lover of art, and whose conversation delighted me, also many others who soon formed an agreeable society for me, notwithstanding all that may be said of the reserve of the English as a rule.

The most admired woman in London at this period was the Duchess of Devonshire. I had often heard of her beauty and of her great influence in political affairs, and when I called on her she received me most kindly. She was about forty-five years of age. Her features were very regular; but I was not struck with her beauty. She had too high a colour, and had lost the sight of one eye. As at this time it was the fashion to wear the hair low on the forehead, she concealed this eye under a mass of curls. The Duchess of Devonshire was of medium height, and not too stout for her age, her easy manners were extremely gracious.

I went again to her house for a public concert and *rout*. It is the custom of the English aristocracy to lend their reception

rooms for purposes of this kind, reserving one or two rooms for their own friends and acquaintances. I was of this number, and whilst sitting near the Duchess she made me notice a man seated a good way from, but facing us, and said to me:

"Has he not a remarkably intellectual and distinguished appearance?"

This was Sir Francis Burdett, whose election as a Member of Parliament she had so greatly helped to gain. I shall never forget the terror his triumph caused me, on meeting one day in the street a coach full of people both ouside and in, all yelling: "Sir Francis Burdett! Sir Francis Burdett!" The greater number of these people were drunk, and were throwing stones at the windows in the street. As I was perfectly ignorant of the meaning of such a scene, I was greatly alarmed, thinking that a revolution had broken out in England. I quickly returned to my own house, where I was happy to find Prince Bariatinsky, who had lived a long while in London, and fancying I might be uneasy,

had called to reassure me. He told me that this sort of thing always took place at the time of any important election, and that by the following day, it would be quiet.

The Duchess of Devonshire had used all her influence for the election of Fox to Parliament, and succeeded at a time when it appeared almost hopeless. Never myself mixing in politics, I could not understand how this great lady, who was at the head of the popular party, was also so intimate with the Prince of Wales. In fact she sometimes lectured him. On one occasion at a *rout* where they were both present, I reproached the Prince of Wales for having failed to keep his appointment for a sitting; the Duchess appeared much pleased at my frankness, and said:

"You are right, princes ought never to break their word."

I heard in France, in 1808, of the death of the Duchess of Devonshire, who left three children; a son, the present Duke,

and two daughters; one married to Lord Granville, now English Ambassador to France, and the other married Lord Morpeth.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Prince of Wales—I take his Portrait—Mrs. Fitzherbert—My Letter to an English Painter—M. le Comte d'Artois—The Comtesse de Polastron—The Duc de Berri.

SHORTLY after my arrival in London, the Treaty of Amiens having been broken, all the French who had not lived in England over a year were obliged to leave at once. The Prince of Wales, to whom I had been presented, assured me that I should not be included in this order, and that he would immediately obtain the King's consent to my remaining. This permission was at once given me, with all the necessary

details, mentioning that *I might travel wherever I pleased throughout the Kingdom.* This was a favour that the French who had lived years in England could rarely obtain. The Prince of Wales completed his act of courtesy by bringing me the order himself.

The Prince of Wales must have been at this period about forty years of age, but he looked older, as he was already too stout. Tall and well-made, he had a fine face; all his features were noble and regular. He wore a wig, arranged with much skill, the hair being divided in front like that of the Apollo Belvedere, and which suited him admirably. He was fond of athletic exercises; he spoke French well and easily. He had a most elegant appearance, and he was magnificent to prodigality in his tastes; his debts were so enormous that at last his father and Parliament ended by paying them.

As he was for a long while one of the handsomest men in the three Kingdoms, he also became the idol of women. His first

mistress was Mrs. Robinson, then, later on, he had a more serious engagement with Mrs. Fitzherbert, a widow, older than himself, but very beautiful. His love was so violent that at one time it was feared he would marry this woman, who was the daughter of one of the first Catholic families in Ireland. His inconstant nature saved him from this danger, and since then many women have succeeded Mrs. Fitzherbert.

It was shortly before my departure that I took the portrait of the Prince of Wales. It was nearly full length and in uniform. Many of the English painters were furious against me, when they heard I had commenced this picture, and that the Prince gave me as long as I liked to finish it. I knew that the Queen had said her son paid court to me, and that he frequently breakfasted at my house. She told an untruth, for the Prince of Wales never came to my house in the morning except for a sitting.

As soon as his portrait was finished, he

gave it to his friend, Mrs. Fitzherbert. She had it arranged in a frame on wheels (the same as large toilette-glasses), so as to be able to move it into whatever room she occupied.

The ill-temper of the English painters did not confine itself to mere words. A Mr. M——, a portrait painter, published a pamphlet, in which he treated French painting in general with much bitterness, and mine in particular. Some parts were so unfair and ridiculous that, putting aside my own wounded feelings, I felt obliged to take upon myself the defence of the celebrated painters whose countrywoman I was, and I wrote this gentleman a severe letter on the subject. This letter, which I read to several of my friends, was soon the topic of conversation in London society.

I met many of my countrymen in England whom I had known years ago, amongst others, the Comte de Ménard, the Baron de Roll, the Duc de Sérant, the Duc de Rivière, and a number of other French *émigrés*, whom I invited to my *soirées*. I

had the happiness of meeting Monsieur le Comte d'Artois. I met him at a party at Lady Percival's, who entertained many foreigners. He was much stouter than when I had last seen him, and looked very handsome. Shortly afterwards he did me the honour to visit my studio. I was absent, and only returned at the moment he was leaving my house, but he had the goodness to return, in order to compliment me on the portrait of the Prince of Wales, which pleased him extremely.

Monsieur le Comte d'Artois did not go much into society. Having very small means, he saved all he possibly could to help the more necessitous French who were *émigrés* like himself. The goodness of his heart made him sacrifice his own pleasures, in order to benefit others. I knew this for a fact, by an incident which it is a pleasure for me to relate. A very interesting young person, named Mérel, who played beautifully on the harp, had come to London in the hope of gaining her living. She announced a concert. I assisted her, as

far as I was able, to get rid of her tickets; but, in spite of all my efforts, there were so few people present, and it was so terribly cold, I was obliged to leave before the end of the concert. I mentioned Mademoiselle Mérel's misfortune to the Comte de Vaudreuil, and he mentioned it to the Prince. "Is she French?" asked the Comte d'Artois, and receiving a reply to that effect by Monsieur de Vaudreuil, he charged him at once to give ten guineas to the young artist.

Monsieur le Comte d'Artois never left his old friend the Comtesse de Polastron, who was always an invalid, and unable to leave her house. The Prince's solicitude for her was so great that he divined all her wants, and was her most assiduous nurse.

Besides her ill-health, Madame de Polastron had the misfortune to lose her only son, who died of yellow fever at Gibraltar. She died shortly afterwards, and Monsieur le Comte d'Artois remained inconsolable.

The son of this Prince, M. le Duc de Berri, often came to visit me in the morning. He came sometimes carrying under his arm small pictures that he had purchased at a very low price. What proves him to have been a thorough connaisseur in painting, was that these pictures were superb Wouvermans; but it required a very skilled eye to appreciate their merit under the dirt which covered them. I have since seen these pictures at his house in the Palace of the Elysée-Bourbon.

The Duc de Berri was also passionately fond of music. He had a noble disposition, and an excellent heart; I could relate many traits of his kindness to his inferiors, kindness which has made him beloved by all who knew him.

I was at the theatre in London when the news arrived of the assassination of the Duc d'Enghien. At once all the ladies who filled the boxes rose to leave, and the piece would not have been finished, if a report had not been spread that the news was false. Everyone reseated themselves; but,

on leaving the theatre, alas, all was confirmed. We heard also some of the details of this atrocious crime, which will always leave a horrible stain on the life of Bonaparte.

The following day we went to the funeral mass which was celebrated for the repose of the soul of this noble victim. All the French, our Princes included, and a great many English ladies were present. The Abbé de Bouvant preached a most touching sermon on the subject. The sermon concluded by an invocation to the All Powerful that a similar destiny should not be the fate of our dear Princes. Alas! this prayer was not heard, since we have seen the Duc de Berri fall under the poniard of an infamous assassin.

It was some time after the death of the Duc d'Enghien before I again saw his unfortunate father, the Duc de Bourbon, and when about a month afterwards he came to see me, sorrow had changed him to such an extent that he quite frightened me. He could not speak for some time on enter-

ing, but seated himself, and clasping his hands over his face, which was wet with tears said: "No, I shall never get over it!"

It would be impossible to describe how much I felt for him in this terrible sorrow.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Chinnery Family — Viotti — Windsor—Hampton Court—Herschel—Bath—The Duchess of Dorset—Madame de Vaudreuil—M. le Duc d'Orléans—M. le Duc de Montpensier—The Margravine of Anspach—Stowe—Warwick.

THOUGH the kind reception shown me had induced me to remain nearly three years in London, when I had originally intended to stay only three months, the climate of this city did not suit me, and I seized every opportunity of inhaling the pure air at the beautiful country-seats of England, where besides I saw the sun. Soon after my arrival, I com-

menced by passing a fortnight with Mrs. Chinnery at Gillwell, where I met the celebrated Viotti. The house was most elegant, and I was received most cordially. The entrance door was ornamented with garlands of flowers. The staircase was decorated in the same manner; in short it was like fairyland. On my entry into the drawing-room, two little angels, Mrs. Chinnery's son and daughter, sang a charming little song that the amiable Viotti had composed for me. I was quite touched by such an affectionate reception; and the fortnight passed at Gillwell I have always remembered as one of joy and happiness. Mrs. Chinnery was a very lovely woman, with a highly cultivated mind. Her daughter, then fourteen years of age, exhibited a surprising talent for the piano, so that every evening, this young girl, Viotti and Mrs. Chinnery, who was herself a good musician, afforded us most charming concerts.

I recollect that Mrs. Chinnery's son though still quite a child, had a veritable passion

for reading. They could not induce him to leave his books. At the age of eighteen this young man had already acquired so much notice for his talents, that at the Restoration he was deputed to regulate the accounts of the expenses occasioned by the stay of the English Army in France.

I frequently made excursions in the environs of London, and employed in this manner all the time I could give to my pleasures.

At Windsor, where the King resided, I only admired the park, which is very fine. The King frequently walked with his two daughters on a magnificent terrace, where there is a superb and extended view.

Hampton Court is another royal residence where I saw some splendid painted windows, superior to any I had ever seen before. There were also some fine pictures and grand cartoons designed by Raffaelle, that I could not sufficiently admire.

I went with Prince Bariatinsky and several other Russians to visit Doctor

Herschel. This celebrated astronomer lived quietly at some distance from London. His sister, who never left him, aided him in his astronomical researches, and both of them were worthy of each other, as much for their learning, as for their noble simplicity. We saw there a telescope of such enormous dimensions, that one might almost have been able to walk inside it.

The Doctor received us with the most obliging cordiality; he had the kindness to show us the sun through brown glasses; and in the evening we saw the planet which he had discovered and which bore his name; we also saw a large map of the moon on which was represented the mountains, ravines, and rivers, which makes this planet resemble the globe which we inhabit; we were all delighted by our visit.

I cannot speak of the environs of London, without mentioning several beautiful places where the English go to take the waters.

Matlock, for instance, reminded me of

Swiss scenery. The public walk is bordered on one side by fine rocks, covered with flowering shrubs, and on the other by grassy swards. The vegetation in England is perfectly beautiful, and presents a delicious prospect to lovers of nature.

Tunbridge Wells is another very picturesque watering place, and it is certainly true that though one can be well amused in the mornings walking about the lovely environs, yet the evenings are very dull, notwithstanding that parties are of constant occurrence. At these assemblies, "God save the King," is invariably played after supper, which always affected me greatly, as I could not help drawing comparisons on the different state of public feeling in England and in France.

Brighton, which is the residence of the Prince of Wales, is even more renowned for its waters than Tunbridge Wells, or Matlock. It is a very fine town, and faces Dieppe.

I also visited Bath, which place had been always pointed out to me as the gay-

est in England, and I copy a letter I wrote to my brother on my return to London from visiting it.

"London, February 12th, 1803.

"I have not written to you for some weeks, my dear good friend; do not be angry with me, for the days are so short, and I write so little. The evenings, on the contrary, are very long, and if writing by candle light did not fatigue my eyes too much, I could send you volumes.

"I see you are uneasy on my account as to how I endure the fogs, and the smoke of coal fires; to this last I am now quite accustomed—I even prefer it to our own; but to the dense heavy atmosphere which surrounds me, I shall never get reconciled. However, five or six miles out of London, you find a totally different climate, and I get away as often as possible in order to inhale it.

"I have just returned from Bath, a place I had often desired to see. It is a superb

town, and beautifully situated. It is the most fashionable resort in England. There are no end to the balls, concerts, and routs, which are held in the public rooms, which are capable of holding five or six hundred people. At one of the concerts, I heard Madame Krumoltz who played exquisitely on the harp. After the concert, we had supper in a large room filled with long and very narrow tables, reminding one of a refectory. I was with Madame de Beaurepaire, and we seated ourselves by the side of two old and very ugly Englishwomen. I soon discovered they were of the number of those who never quit their native town, and were, in consequence, very stiff and haughty in their demeanour. As a rule, the great ladies of London, and Englishwomen who have travelled, are amiable and polite, whilst our neighbours, as soon as they were seated, turned their back on us with a very scornful air. We resigned ourselves to endure the disdain of these old women, when an Englishman of their acquaintance came up and whispered a few words to them, when

they immediately turned round, and seemed at once disposed to become polite.

"I remained three weeks at Bath, and did not find it either gay or amusing. It rained nearly the whole of the time I was there. Write to me soon. Adieu, my dear friend."

Shortly before my visit to Bath, I spent some days at Knowles, which, after having once belonged to Queen Elizabeth, was now in possession of the Duchess of Dorset. In front of the hall door are two large elm trees which are said to be over a thousand years old. The park is extremely picturesque.

The Castle contains many fine pictures, the furniture is of the time of Elizabeth. In the Duchess's bed-room the curtains are all strewn with gold and silver stars and the toilette apparatus is in solid silver.

The Duchess of Dorset, who was very rich, had married Mr. Wilfort, whom I had known as English Ambassador at St.

Petersburg. This gentleman possessed no fortune of his own, but he was very handsome, and had a noble and dignified appearance.

The first time we sat down to dinner, the Duchess said to me, "You will find it very dull, for we never speak at table." I reassured her on this point, as I was accustomed to dining alone. She certainly kept this rule most rigorously, for at dessert her son, between eleven and twelve years of age, spoke a few words to her, when she sent him away, without the smallest mark of tenderness. I could not help thinking on what I had heard of English mothers—that, in general, they took little notice of their children when they were no longer quite small, and that they only care for babies.

I again met in London the amiable Comte de Vaudreuil. He was looking much changed and very thin. All that he had gone through in France had shaken his constitution. He had married his niece whilst in England, and I went to see her at Twickenham, where she resided. Madame

la Comtesse de Vaudreuil was young and pretty. She had large blue eyes, and a charming, fresh face. She invited me to spend a few days with her at Twickenham, which I did, and during that time took the portrait of her two sons.

Monsieur le Duc d'Orléans (afterwards Louis Phillipe, King of the French), with his two brothers, lived quite near them. The Comte de Vaudreuil took me to call on the Duc d'Orléans, who had been very kind to him. We found this Prince, whose delight was in study, seated at a long table, covered with books, one of which was open before him. Whilst we were with him, he made me notice a landscape painted by his brother, the Duc de Montpensier, with whom I also made acquaintance during my stay at Madame de Vaudreuil's. I only saw the younger Prince, the Duc de Beaujolais, out walking. He was good-looking and very lively.

The Duc de Montpensier came sometimes to take me out sketching with him. He took me to see the superb view from the

terrace at Richmond. He also showed me the trunk of the tree under which Milton sat when composing his "Paradise Lost." The environs of Twickenham are very interesting, and the Duc de Montpensier knew their beauties so well that I congratulated myself on having him for a *cicerone*, and all the more that this young Prince was extremely kind and good.

I had promised to take the portrait of the Margravine of Anspach, who came to invite me to pass some days with her at her country-seat. As I had been told that the Margravine was a very eccentric woman, who would never leave me quiet for a moment, who would wake me up at five o'clock every morning, with a thousand other insupportable things, I only accepted her invitation after making certain conditions. I, first of all, asked for a bed-room where I should hear no noise, as I liked sleeping late. I also told her that I liked to walk alone. The excellent woman consented to everything, and religiously kept her word, to such a point that if by chance I met her in

her park, where she often worked like a common labourer, she would not appear to see me, and would let me pass without saying one word.

Whether the Margravine of Anspach had been calumniated, or whether she had the goodness to restrain herself for me, I must own that during the whole of my visit I was perfectly happy, so that when she asked me to pay her a visit at another of her country residences, named Benheim, I did not hesitate to go there. The park and house at this last-named place were much finer than at Armesmott, and I passed my time there so agreeably, that instead of staying one week, I remained three.

I made some excursions with the Margravine by sea. We visited the Isle of Wight, which in some parts reminded me of Switzerland. This island is renowned for the gentle and peaceable manners of its inhabitants. They all live like one family, I am told, and enjoy the greatest peace and happiness. It is possible that since the time of which I write, a great many regi-

ments having been quartered in the island, the tranquillity may have been diminished. The Isle of Wight and the Island of Ischia are the only ones on which I could have wished to pass my life.

These maritime excursions pleased me very much, and we frequently renewed them.

I found it very agreeable, at the time when London is deserted, to visit as many country-houses as I could, and I accepted most gratefully all the invitations I received. I thus made the best I could of the monotony of English life, which could never be to my taste, after having lived so long in Paris and St. Petersburg. I stayed some time at Stowe with the Marchioness of Buckingham. The mansion was magnificent and full of pictures by the old masters. I remember a grand portrait of Vandyke, where the hand was so beautiful and so finely in relief, that I was almost tempted to believe it real. The park at Stowe is perfection.

The Marquis and Marchioness of Buck-

ingham received French people with infinite grace and kindness. They had both been most generous in assisting distinguished *émigrés;* this I learnt through the Duc de Sérant, who had stayed a long time with them, and was truly grateful to this noble couple.

I also visited the country seat of Lord Moira. Though I have forgotten the name of his house, I remember that it was most comfortable, and scrupulously clean. Lord Moira's sister, Lady Charlotte, did the honours with much grace and kindness, but nevertheless it was dull! At dinner, the ladies left before the dessert; the men remaining to drink and talk politics. It is necessary to say, however, that at none of the entertainments at which I was present were the men ever intoxicated, which proves to me that if this custom existed in England as one heard so often, it never did so in good society. I must mention that I dined several times at Lord Moira's with the Duc de Berri, who had been out hunt-

ing all day, and I noticed that he drank nothing but water, though calumny asserted that he indulged in too much wine.

After dinner all the ladies used to retire into a long room, and occupied themselves with embroidery and wool work. No one spoke a word. On their side, the gentlemen took their books, and kept the same silence.

One fine moonlight night, I asked Lord Moira's sister if I might be allowed to take a stroll in the park. She replied that the shutters were closed, and that it would be imprudent to open them, as the picture gallery was on the ground floor. As there was a magnificent library, containing a beautiful collection of engravings, my only resource was to take possession of these works, and look them all through, refraining as the custom was from making a single remark. On one occasion, I uttered an exclamation of delight at the sight of a particularly charming engraving, and shall not easily

forget the surprised looks of all present. However, it is a fact, that the total absence of conversation in England is not caused by the impossibility of talking agreeably; I know many English who are very witty, and I may add, I never met one who was a fool.

The season was too far advanced whilst I was at Lord Moira's for me to take any long walks in the neighbourhood. Lady Charlotte invited me to drive with her in her pony-carriage, which was as hard as a country cart, so that I could not endure it for any time. Englishwomen are so accustomed to the severity of their climate, that I have frequently met them in pouring rain in open carriages and with no umbrellas. They content themselves with wrapping a cloak round them, which is decidedly inconvenient to a foreigner, unaccustomed to such an aquatic mode of proceeding.

I had a great desire to see Warwick Castle, which I had heard so much praised. I went there hoping to visit it *incognito*,

but as soon as Lord Warwick heard my name he at once came forward, and with the most obliging distinction, himself showed me the Castle.

After introducing me to his wife, who asked me to luncheon, and made me promise to spend a few days with them, Lord Warwick took me a drive round the park; he also showed me, amongst many other works of art, an enormous antique vase of the greatest beauty. He also pointed out to me the two little heads I had drawn in chalk on the panels of the door at Sir William Hamilton's. He told me he had paid a high price to him for them, to whom, however, I had not sold them.

I also visited Blenheim, belonging to the Duke of Marlborough, where I saw some superb pictures and a very fine park.

Often when returning from these different visits, I have stopped on the hills, four or five miles from London, in the hope of getting a look at this immense city, but

the fog which hung over it was so dense, that I could never see anything but a few steeples.

CHAPTER XIX.

I leave England—Rotterdam—Antwerp—M. d'Hédouville—I arrive in Paris—Madame Catalani—Mademoiselle Duchesnois—Madame Murat—I take her portrait.

THOUGH I had only intended to remain four or five months in England, I was there nearly three years, detained not merely by my pecuniary interests as a painter, but still more by the great kindness shown me. I have often heard it said that the English are not a hospitable nation; I am far from participating in this opinion, and I shall ever retain a lively sense of gratitude for the

reception accorded to me in London. I should not, therefore, have decided so quickly on returning to France, if I had not heard that my daughter had arrived in Paris; I greatly desired to see her, and all the more that I heard privately that her father had allowed her to form several acquaintances, who appeared to be most unsuitable for such a young woman.

As, at this period, Bonaparte would not allow any of the English to leave France who had not done so before the breach of the Treaty of Amiens, Lady Herne, well known for her love of the arts, said I ought to be kept as an hostage. In fact, every possible motive was sought after by my amiable friends to induce me to remain, and, under other circumstances, I could not have resisted their entreaties.

Just as I was getting into my post-chaise to start, the charming Madame Grassini arrived. I thought she had come simply to wish me good-bye, but she declared she was going to accompany me to the seaport from which I was to

embark, and made me get into her carriage, which was filled with pillows and other comforts.

"For what use are all these?" I asked.

"You do not know then," she replied, "that you are going to the worst inn in the world? you may have to remain there a week or more, if the wind is not favourable, and my intention is to remain with you."

I cannot say how deeply I felt this mark of interest. This beautiful woman left all the pleasures of London, her friends, without speaking of a crowd of adorers, simply to keep me company. I can never forget it.

I embarked for Rotterdam, where I arrived at five o'clock in the morning; but we were retained by *order* on board till nearly two o'clock. Immediately on landing, I went to see the Marquis de Beauharnais, brother-in-law to Joséphine, and then Prefect of Rotterdam. As I came from London, he informed me I must

remain from eight to ten days in the town, which annoyed me exceedingly; more than this, I was sent for to see General Oudinot, and I own that I felt rather frightened at this visit; but the General received me so kindly, that my fears soon fled, and I resigned myself to wait till my liberty was granted.

The Spanish Ambassador, whom I had known at St. Petersburg, and who resided at the Hague, having heard of my misfortune, took pity on me; he frequently called in his carriage to take me for drives in the environs. At last, after waiting ten days, I received my passport and I was free.

I left for Antwerp, where the Prefect, M. d'Hédouville, showed me the greatest attention; he took me all over the city and I saw everything remarkable in it. On the following day I resumed my journey to Paris.

It was a great joy to meet again my old friends, and above all my daughter. Her husband, who had accompanied her to

France, had been commissioned by Prince Narischkin to procure singers for St. Petersburg; he remained a few months and then returned alone, for love had long since fled, and my daughter stayed in Paris to my great satisfaction. For her misfortune and my own, my daughter had a most lively disposition; and I was unable to make her feel the disgust I felt for bad company. Added to this, I possessed no influence over her mind, and one may imagine how many bitter tears she made me shed. But she was my daughter; her beauty and talents made her most seductive, and though I could not induce her to live with me, seeing that she persisted in seeing people whom I would not receive, I saw her every day, which was still a great joy for me.

The first person with whom I made acquaintance on my return from London, was Madame Catalani, whose splendid voice was the delight of Paris. This great singer was young and beautiful. Her voice was the most astonishing that one could possibly

hear, her execution and compass were marvellous. I took the portrait of this charming woman, and kept it as a companion to the one I took of Madame Grassini.

I hastened to resume my musical evenings, and Madame Catalani was so obliging as to sing at them, to the great satisfaction of all my company. We had very little instrumental music; for Viotti was absent, and it was not till some time later that the delicious violin of Lafont came to console us for his loss. I remember that on one occasion Madame Dugazon, who was passing an evening with me, sang the romance of Nina, by Dalayrac, with so much expression, that we could not restrain our tears.

As I could not always have music, I got up *tableaux vivants*, which had had so much success at St. Petersburg; taking care to place behind the gauze screen the handsomest men and prettiest women, I arranged some charming ones.

For a person who desired to make time

pass agreeably for her friends, I had what I must call a piece of rare good fortune. My brother was giving at this period lessons in declamation to Mademoiselle Duchesnois. He brought her to me, and made her recite in my drawing-room some fragments of her parts. We were charmed with her superior talent, and could not imagine why they would not engage her at the Comédie Française. The fact was that Mademoiselle Duchesnois was *not* pretty; but I felt sure that the public on hearing her would soon forget her plainness. As I had very little personal influence, I called on Madame de Montesson, who was in favour at the Court of Bonaparte. I vaunted my young actress so highly, that she invited her to a grand *soiréé*, in order to hear her to advantage. Everyone was enchanted, and our *protégée* was soon admitted. The success she obtained on the very first day, in the part of Phèdre, was such, that it enabled her to hold her own against the most beautiful creature ever seen on the stage, Mademoiselle Georges, who made her *début*

at the same time and in the same company.

On the first day of her public appearance, I gave Mademoiselle Duchesnois my best advice, as a painter, on her costume and head-dress. I cannot express how rejoiced I was at her great success. I was truly glad to have contributed to the fortune of this young girl, who had no other means of existence than her talent, and who was besides a most excellent person. She has always been most grateful for the support my brother and myself afforded her, and until her death remained my friend.

I often visited Madame de Ségur. Her husband told me that my visit to England had greatly displeased the Emperor, who said to him:

"Madame Le Brun has gone to see *her friends.*"

Bonaparte's grudge against me was not however very strong, for a few days after having spoken in this manner, he sent M. Denon to order me to paint for him the portrait of his sister, Madame Murat. I

did not dare to refuse, though I was to receive only seventy-two pounds for it, being just half the the sum I was in the habit of receiving for portraits of that size. This sum was even less, on taking into consideration that I included Madame Murat's little girl in the picture, without augmenting the price.

It would be impossible for me to describe all the contrarieties and torments I underwent whilst painting this picture. At the first sitting Madame Murat appeared with two maid-servants, who had to dress her hair before I could begin my painting. On my representing to her that it was impossible for me to commence whilst she was thus engaged, she consented to send the women away. Then she constantly missed her appointment, so that though I wished to finish the painting as soon as possible, she kept me in Paris nearly the whole summer. Besides this, the interval between her sittings was so long, that she frequently changed the manner of wearing her hair. The same thing happened with her dresses, and the

last was always the one to be adopted. In short, the constant worry Madame Murat made me undergo, upset my temper so much, that one day when she was in my studio, I said to M. Denon, loud enough for her to hear:

"I have painted real princesses who have not tormented me, or kept me waiting for them."

The fact is that Madame Murat was quite ignorant that punctuality is the politeness of kings, as Louis XIV. so well expressed, and who in truth was no parvenu.

CHAPTER XX.

Louveciennes—Madame Hocquart—The Twenty-first of March, 1814—Foreigners—The Pavilion of Louveciennes—Louis XVIII.—The Twentieth of March, 1815—The Family of Louis XVIII.

AS I had no wish to pass my summers in Paris, I bought a country-house at Louveciennes, which I still inhabit. The lovely view of the Seine, with the delicious woods of Marly, and the cultivated country around Louveciennes, made me think it a sort of promised land, and it is in fact one of the most charming of the environs of Paris.

Another pleasure for me in my rural

establishment, was having for neighbours Madame Pourat, and her daughter, the Comtesse Hocquart. Madame Hocquart is one of those distinguished women whom it is a pleasure to know. Her natural gaiety and wit had always drawn me to her, and it was a real good fortune for me to be living near her. Amongst her many talents she was a perfect actress, and in certain parts might be compared without any flattery to Mademoiselle Comtat. The result of this was, that theatricals were much in vogue at her house, and that a crowd came from Paris to applaud Madame Hocquart.

On arriving at Louveciennes, I at once went to visit the Pavilion, which I had last seen in all its beauty in the month of September. It was quite empty, and all that had ornamented it in the time of Madame du Barri had disappeared. Not only had the statues and busts been taken away, but even the chimney bronzes, and the locks of the doors. In short, the Revolution had visited the place, as it had

everywhere else. The four walls still remained, whilst at Marly, Sceaux, Belle Vue, and many other places, the name alone is left,

I was established at Louveciennes when the allied armies advanced for the second time on Paris. Everyone knows that the foreign troops ill-treated the villages much more than the towns; also, I shall never forget the night of the 21st of March, 1814.

Ignorant that the danger was so near, I had not even meditated flight. It was eleven o'clock at night, and I had just gone to bed, when my Swiss servant, Joseph, who spoke German, entered my room, thinking I should need some one to protect me. The village had just been invaded by the Prussians, who were pillaging all the houses, and Joseph himself was followed by three soldiers, with atrocious faces, who, sword in hand, approached my bed. Joseph made himself hoarse with saying in German that I was Swiss and ill; but, without listening to him, they com-

menced by taking my gold snuff-box, which lay on the table by my bed-side. Then they felt to see if I had concealed any silver under the clothes, and one of them coolly cut out a piece of the counterpane with his sabre. One of them, who appeared to be French, or at least spoke our language perfectly, said to them, "Give her back her box," but far from obeying, they went to my desk, took possession of all its contents, and pillaged my wardrobes. In short, after having made me pass four hours in the most dreadful fright, these terrible people left my house, where I could no longer remain. This was not the only time I was obliged to quit it in a similar manner. On the return of the Allies in 1815, the English visited Louveciennes. They took, amongst other things, a superb lacquered box, which I regretted extremely, as it had been given me at St. Petersburg by my old friend, Comte Strogonoff.

My desire was to reach Saint-Germain, but the road was very unsafe. I went, therefore, and sought refuge at the house

of an excellent person, who lived at Marly, near the Pavilion of Madame du Barri. Other women, as frightened as myself, had chosen this place as their asylum. We all dined together, and slept six in one room, where it was impossible to get any rest, as the nights passed in continual alarms, and, besides, I felt uneasy on account of my poor servant, to whom I owed my life. This honest fellow had remained in my house, in order to look after the soldiers, and to fulfil their requirements, which made me tremble for him, as the village had been given over to pillage. The peasants bivouacked in the vineyards, and slept on straw in the open air, after having been despoiled of all they possessed.

I was so terrified by all I heard, as also by the firing, which was incessant, that one evening I tried to get down into a cellar, where I wanted to remain; but in doing so hurt my leg, and was obliged to go back again.

The last affair took place at Roquencourt. There was fighting also close to Madame

Hocquart's house, and very near the place in which I was. We heard that, as soon as the fighting had ceased, the Prussians had ransacked the house of a very Bonapartist lady, who, whilst the fighting was going on, cried out from her terrace to the French, "Kill all these people there!" The victors, who had heard her, entered her house and broke all the furniture and glasses, whilst she fled to Versailles.

Though we could gain little information of what was going on from Paris, yet it was easy to see the tradespeople of Louveciennes, who met every evening in the house we inhabited, were all desirous for the return of the Bourbons. At last, the Mayor, whose conduct had been both honourable and energetic, entered the village, surrounded by all the country folk, wearing the white scarf. The following day we were all assembled in the garden of our refuge, when some one came in to tell us that Monsieur Dagwet had just arrived, and had brought the news of the entry of Monsieur le Comte d'Artois into France.

This news gave me the greatest delight, and I at once started for Paris, leaving my good Joseph at Louveciennes to look after my house. I have kept the letters I received from this faithful servant, who groaned at seeing my garden ravaged, my cellar emptied, my beautiful court destroyed, and my rooms plundered. "I implore them," he wrote, "to be less destructive, and to be contented with what I give them, but they reply, 'The French did much worse to us.'" And in this the Prussians were right. My poor Joseph and myself were the victims of bad example.

It was on the 12th of April, 1814, that I had the happiness of seeing M. le Comte d'Artois make his entry into Paris. It is impossible to describe my feelings on this occasion; I wept for joy. One knows with what enthusiasm the great majority of the Parisians received our princes. As people asked M. le Comte d'Artois for news of the King, whom he preceded, he replied:

"He always suffers in his legs, but his

head is excellent, we will walk for him, and he will think for us."

Experience has proved the justice of these words, for the strong sense of Louis XVIII. was very necessary to strengthen the restoration at this epoch, when the Bonapartists were still so numerous.

At last Louis XVIII. himself entered Paris, bringing pardon and peace for all; I went on to the Quai des Orfèvres to see him pass. He was in an open carriage with Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême; the proclamation which he had just had announced, having been received with acclamations of joy, the excitement of the crowd was great and general. Flags hung from every window, and the cries of "Vive le roi," was so hearty and unanimous that I was quite overcome. One could read on the expressive face of the Duchesse d'Angoulême the satisfaction such a reception afforded her; her smile was sweet, but sad; a very natural circumstance, for she was following the same road that her mother had taken on going to the guillotine, and

she knew it. Nevertheless the acclamations the sight of the King and herself elicited, must have greatly consoled her afflicted heart. The crowd followed them to the doors of the Tuileries, singing and dancing before the Palace; the King then came to one of the windows and kissed his hand repeatedly to the people, when their delight appeared to know no bounds.

In the evening there was a great reception at the Tuileries—an immense quantity of ladies went to it; the King spoke to all with perfect grace, and recalled to some of them flattering anecdotes about their families.

As I had a great desire to see Louis XVIII., I mixed in the crowd on the Sunday to see him pass along the gallery when he went to mass. I was placed with all the rest in front of the windows, in such a manner that the King could see us perfectly; as soon as he perceived me, he came to me, shook me by the hand in the most amiable manner and said many flattering things on the pleasure it gave

him to see me again. As he remained some moments thus holding my hand, and he did not address any other lady present, those who surrounded us no doubt took me for a very grand personage, for as soon as the King had passed, a young officer, who saw me alone, came and offered me his arm, and would not leave me till he had placed me in my carriage.

The greater number of persons who came back with our Princes were my own friends or acquaintances. It was very sweet, after so many years of exile, to find oneself in one's own country; but, alas! this happiness was not of long duration, and even whilst we were rejoicing over the change, Bonaparte had landed at Cannes!

I have been able, like others, to compare the reception which he received at the capital with that which had so recently been offered to the King. It was on the 19th of March, 1815, at midnight, that Louis XVIII. and all the royal family quitted Paris. Napoleon entered the following day, the 20th of March; but though he

was brought back by the army and sustained by bayonets, the Parisians were none the less in a state of stupor. Everyone well knew that he brought with him into France, war and ruin; so the cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" were very rare. Whether it was chance or calculation, he did not arrive until eight o'clock in the evening, and at once took possession of the Tuileries, surrounded by an exultant army, but a population mournful and sad.

The King had retired to Gand, and I remember the lower class of the people sang loudly in the streets of Paris: "Rendez-nous notre paire de gants." I have not forgotten another bon-mot of a flower girl, who said to a woman by her side, selling lilies:

"Well! there is nothing more to be done with lilies, and I shall sell nothing but violets."

"That's true," replied the other, "it is very easy to make them lie low, but I defy you to do so with the lilies."

Without wishing to insult the memory

of a great captain, and of the brave generals and soldiers who aided him in gaining so many splendid victories, I may ask what these victories have done for us, and if we are the better by one inch of ground for all the blood they cost us. For my part, I own that the bulletins of the campaign in Russia revolted me; one of the last, after having spoken of the thousand of French soldiers we had lost, finished thus: "The Emperor was never in better health." On reading this bulletin at the house of my friends, Mesdames de Bellegarde, we were so indignant that we threw it into the fire.

That which proves how tired the people were of these eternal wars, was the little enthusiasm that they showed during the Hundred Days. More than once I saw Bonaparte appear at the window, and retire at once very angry, for the only acclamations he received were from a crowd of gamins, paid no doubt to cry derisively: "Vive l'Empereur!" Let them compare this indifference of the population to the

joy which burst forth on the return of the King, who re-entered Paris on the 8th of July, 1815; this joy was universal, for after so many disasters Louis XVIII. brought in peace.

From this time it can be seen how much this Prince joined to his other brilliant qualities both wisdom and skill. The circumstances were difficult, and Louis XVIII. was the very monarch needed for the occasion; to much courage and coolness he united a great elevation of mind; his manners were royal; he gave liberally; his features were not wanting in beauty, and their expression was very noble, and though very infirm, his appearance at once inspired involuntary respect. His favourite recreation was to converse on literature with intellectual people; as he was a good Latin scholar, he liked conversing in this language with our most learned Latinists; his memory was prodigious, he could recite any remarkable pieces out of any book he had read once.

Louis XVIII. greatly enjoyed and patronised the Comédie Française; he went often to this theatre, and he thoroughly appreciated the talent of Talma. The King held frequent long conversations with him, and generally in English, as they both spoke this language perfectly. I am told that Talma, said: "I prefer the grace of Louis XVIII. to the pension of Bonaparte."

This grace, in fact, was the great charm of the Princes, it doubled the value of each gift. The Comte d'Artois was not behind the King in this respect. When after the death of Louis XVIII. he became King, I was at the Louvre on the day he distributed medals to the painters and sculptors. Before giving them he said in the most gracious manner: "These are not encouragements, but recompenses." All the artists were touched by the tact and flattery of these words.

He noticed me in the crowd, and expressed himself so pleased at seeing me

again, and looking so well, that I had difficulty in restraining my tears.

If M. le Duc de Berri had not all the graces of his father, he had the same tact and ready wit, so useful to princes. I select one example among a thousand. The first time he reviewed the troops, he heard some of them cry out, "Vive l'Empereur!" "You are right, my friends," he at once replied, "every one must live." Then these same soldiers cried out, "Vive le Duc de Berri!"

His kindness of disposition was so great that not only did he interest himself in all that concerned his friends, but in his own household he conducted himself like the father of a family. He was adored by all his servants, and he made use of his influence to encourage them in good conduct, and induced them to be careful and save their money. One day, on getting into his carriage, a little kitchen-boy ran up to him, saying, "My prince, I have saved fifteen francs this year." "Well, my child, this

will make them thirty," replied the Duc de Berri, who doubled the sum.

The Duc de Berri was very orderly in his expenses; his greatest extravagance was his taste for art, which was shared by his amiable wife. The Duchesse de Berri delighted in encouraging young artists; she bought their pictures, and ordered a great many.

I dare not speak of the Duchesse d'Angoulême. What could I say which would not be less than truth? The virtues of this princess are known to the entire world, and I should fear to lessen what history will say of her. Such was the family the Restoration gave back to us.

I leave to others the task of explaining why so many virtues and so much goodness did not suffice to guard and keep their throne; my grateful heart can only regret it.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Queen's Portrait—M. Briffaut—M. Aimé Martin—Désaugiers—Gros—I paint the Duchesse de Berri.

DURING Bonaparte's reign the large portrait I had made of the Queen was stored away out of sight in the Château of Versailles. I went one day to see it. On arriving at the Prince's entrance, a custodian took me into the room where it was shut up, and where the public were not allowed to enter; the guardian who opened the door, recognised me, as he had seen me in Rome, and exclaimed, "Ah! how glad I am to see Madame le Brun!" This man hastened to turn my painting,

it was placed facing the wall, for Bonaparte on hearing that many people came to see it, had ordered it to be taken away. An order which was not well carried out, since they contrived to show it, and the custodian, when I wanted to give him a trifle, refused, saying, I made him gain a good deal without that.

At the Restoration this picture was once more exposed to view. It represented Marie Antoinette having near her the first Dauphin and Madame holding the Duc de Normandie on her knees.

I kept at home another painting of the Queen, which I had executed in Bonaparte's time. Marie Antoinette was represented ascending into heaven; with Louis XVI. and his children seated on some clouds (in allusion to the two they had lost.) I sent this picture to the Comtesse de Chateaubriand to place in the Establishment of Sainte-Thérèse which she had founded. It was put in the vestibule of the church, and the following is the letter she wrote on the subject.

"On Wednesday, Madame, I shall be at your orders, and I feel much affected by the pious pilgrimage you intend to undertake. Madame la Comtesse de Choiseul was well pleased with the place we selected for your admirable allegory. I wish it were more worthily situated, but it is the best we have in this poor Establishment."

Since peace seemed restored to my country, I no longer wished to leave it, and I spent my days between Paris and Louveciennes; for I was as fond as ever of my pretty house in the latter place. I passed eight months of the year there, and my life was very peaceful and contented. I painted, I amused myself with my garden, I took long solitary walks, and on Sundays I received my friends.

I liked Louveciennes so much, that wishing to leave some souvenir of myself, I painted for the Church a Sainte Geneviève, on which occasion Madame de Genlis, who knew I was engaged on this work, sent me some very pretty verses. If I gave pictures I also received them in a most delightful

manner. I had often expressed a wish that my friends would paint upon the panels of my sitting-room at Louveciennes, and leave me some token of themselves. One fine summer's morning, at four o'clock, during my slumbers, M. le Prince de Crespy, the Baron de Feisthamel, M. de Rivière, and my niece, Eugénie Le Brun, set silently to work, and at ten o'clock each one had completed his panel. My astonishment can be imagined, when on coming down to breakfast I entered my room and found it adorned with these charming paintings, besides bouquets of flowers, for it was my fête-day. The tears came into my eyes, and that was my only way of thanking my friends.

I had not given up my Saturday parties in Paris. Death had taken from me my dear Abbé Delille, and several other literary characters, who had long been one of their greatest attractions. But I formed new acquaintances, some of which became very dear. I shall mention M. Briffaut first, he is now an Academician, and was the

author of a tragedy performed with much success at the Comédie Française, (Ninus II.) and some excellent verses, his epistolary style was quite wonderful in its grace and ease. When I was in the country, and he could not come and see me, he wrote, and I may say that his letters almost compensated for his absence; friendship apart, many might be justly compared with those of Madame de Sévigné—I have preserved them very carefully.

I also saw M. Desprès* and M. Aimé Martin;† M. Desprès was one of the most witty men I ever met, he did not live long to adorn society, and was much regretted

* Jean-Baptiste Deprès, born at Dijon, June 24th, 1752, died in Paris, March 2nd, 1832. He was a journalist, and Councillor of State in Holland; he was a member of the French University, a dramatical author and translator of English and Latin works.

† Louis-Aimé Martin was author of "Lettres à Sophie sur la Physique, la Chimie et l'Histoire Naturelle," a work crowned by the French Academy. He was a friend of Bernardin de St. Pierre, and after his death married his widow, and adopted his daughter Viginie. He was professor of literature at the Ecole Polytechnique, etc.

for his talents and worth. M. Aimé Martin will I hope be long preserved to the affection of his friends and the esteem of the public, who are indebted to him for many excellent works.

M. Désaugiers* was another of my friends; his bright face and genial spirit were enough to enliven any repast. He often dined with me, and I remember the Princess Kourakin always invited herself on those occasions, saying that M. Désaugiers was her delight; at dessert he treated us to some of his charming songs, of which he composed several which are inimitable for power and gaiety; the Comte de Forbin,† who knew

* Marc-Antoine Désaugiers, born at Fréjus in 1772, died in Paris, 1827, composed a great number of plays for the stage, which were reproduced at the Théâtres Français et Italien, for the Opéra Comique, etc. His parody on the opera, "Les Petites Danaïdes," was played over four hundred times.

† Louis-Nicholas, Comte de Forbin, archeological painter and man of letters, was born in 1777, he was a Member of the Institute, Director-General of the Louvre Museum, Chevalier of the Order of St. Michael, and Commander of the Legion of Honour.

them all, took care to ask him for the best, and our indiscretion never tired his kindness in complying with our request.

Another person with whom I was very intimate was the celebrated painter Gros.* I knew him when he was barely seven years old, at which time I painted his portrait, and saw even then in his young eyes a love for painting and colour. On my return to France I was astonished, nevertheless, to find the child a man of genius, and the head of a school of painting. From that time, a friendship sprung up between us, which daily increased, for Gros was a generous and sincere friend. I took a great interest in his successes, and was very happy when he was rewarded for his fine painting of the cupola of St. Geneviève by being made a Baron.

Gros was a man of natural impulses, quick to feel. He was equally enthusiastic about a good action or a beautiful picture.

* Antoine-Jean Le Gros was born at Paris, March 16th, 1771, and died June 25th, 1835. His body was found in the Seine, near Meudon.

He did not care for society; he rarely spoke when in a crowd, but he listened attentively, and always answered with a smile or a single word, always very *à propos* of the subject. His death made me feel very grieved. Soon after leaving us for good, he dined with me and I noticed that he seemed to take much to heart some criticisms which he ought to have allowed to pass unobserved. As an artist, as a friend, I shall always regret this great painter, and the sad circumstances of his violent death makes my regrets all the more painful.

But I have allowed my reminiscences to carry me away from that time of my existence to which I had led my readers. I must return to it. In 1819, Monsieur le Duc de Berri wished to buy my "Sybil," which he had seen in London at my studio, and although this picture was the one of my works which I liked best, I hastened to satisfy his demand. A few years afterwards, I painted the portrait of the Duchesse de Berri, who gave me her sittings in the Tuileries with great punctuality,

besides which it was impossible for anyone to be kinder than she was to me. One day, whilst I was painting her, she said, "Wait a moment," and, getting up, went to her library, and fetching out a book that contained an article in my praise, she read it aloud, from the beginning to the end.

During one of our sittings, the Duc de Bordeaux brought his copy-book to his mother, on which the master had written "Very Good." The Duchesse gave him two Louis, whereupon the young Prince, who might have been about six years old, began to jump for joy, saying, "There is something for my poor! but first for my old woman." When he had left us, the Duchess told me he spoke of an old woman he often met out-doors, and who he was very fond of. It was nice to see how this child resembled his mother in his kindly disposition—her ear was always open to the complaints of the unfortunate.

When the Duchesse gave me a sitting, I often felt annoyed at the numbers of people

who visited her. She noticed this, and was good enough to say, "Why did you not ask me to go to your house?" which she did the last two sittings. I confess that I could scarcely help comparing the thoughtfulness of this Princess, during the hours I spent with her, to those dreadful ones which Madame Murat made me pass.

I finished two portraits of the Duchesse de Berri. In one, she wore a red velvet dress, and in the other, one of blue velvet. I do not know what became of these portraits.

CHAPTER XXII.

Cruel Losses I sustained in my Family—Voyage to Bordeaux—Méréville—The Monastery of Marmoutier—Return to Paris—My Nieces.

I MUST now speak of the last sad years of my life, when, in a very short space of time, I saw disappear from this world the beings I loved best. I lost Monsieur Le Brun first. It was true that I had long ceased to have any intercourse with him, but I was none the less much grieved by his death.* You cannot lose for ever without sorrow a person attached to you by such an intimate tie as

* Jean-Baptiste-Pierre Le Brun died in 1813.

that of marriage. But this loss did not approach the cruel one caused me by the death of my daughter. I hastened to her side as soon as I heard of her illness, but all hope of recovery soon disappeared, and I cannot express what I felt when I saw there was no chance of saving her life. When I saw her on the last day, and my eyes fell on that altered and lovely face, I fainted. Madame de Noisville, an old friend, who had accompanied me, forced me to leave this bed of sorrow. She held me up, for my knees refused to support me, and took me to my own home. The next day I had no child.* Madame de Verdun came to tell me, and vainly tried to soothe my grief, for the naughtinesses of the poor little thing were all blotted out of my memory, and I saw her as in the days of her childhood—as I see her now. . . . Alas! she was so young! Why did she not outlive me?

It was in 1819 that I lost my daughter, and in 1820 I lost my brother. So many

* Mademoiselle Jeanne-Julie-Louise Le Brun, wife of M. Nigris, died December 8th, 1819, in Paris.

afflictions succeeding each other made me profoundly melancholy, and my friends, distressed at my appearance, counselled me to try what change of scene and travelling would do. I determined on visiting Bordeaux. I did not know that town, and the route I had to traverse, in order to reach it, would be full of interest.

As I went by way of Orleans I visited Méréville, which belonged to M. de Laborde. His father, who was enormously rich, had spent millions in embellishing this really beautiful estate. Nowhere could one see finer trees, a more abundant vegetation, and nowhere has art, joined to exquisite taste, done more to add to the beauties of nature. In fact it would take too long to enumerate the many lovely objects which render the park of Méréville such an enchanting place, it surpasses in my mind anything I saw in England of the same description. It was composed principally by Robert, the landscape painter, and would make subjects for beautiful pictures.

The château, with its four Gothic towers,

giving it the appearance of a feudal manor, was splendidly furnished. The dining and billiard rooms were admirably decorated, and the great hall with its marbles, bronzes, and statues, made it a residence fit for royalty.

I arrived at Orleans, where I visited the principal places of interest; the cathedral, amongst others, standing out in its solitary darkness against the blue sky, for since my departure I had always enjoyed lovely weather; so that I visited without any hindrance the ruins of these ancient châteaux, of which there only remained a few crumbling walls decked with ivy. For a painter, the route I had chosen was full of interest, on every side were noble ruins which often caused sad reflections, when you thought that wars and revolutions destroyed more in one century than time would do in a thousand years.

As soon as I reached Blois I visited the Château de Chambord, that romantic spot than which one could see nothing that has a more powerful effect on the imagination.

You can stand for ages before those old wooden doors on which are sculptured the initials and devices of Francis I., recalling the story of that amorous king, and many other tales less ancient and less romantic. I should like to have carried away those gates and put them in frames. I should like also to have drawn the interior of the tower where three caryatides are sculptured, of which two represent Diana of Poitiers, and one in the middle, Francis I.; but the heat was so great, added to a strong wind, that being quite overcome, in consequence, I could not find a corner to shelter myself. Now, alas! Æolus alone inhabits those towers and terraces, and yet I could scarcely tear myself from a building which is unique of its kind.

I next visited Chanteloup. This château is superb, and still retains some of the splendours belonging to the Duc de Choiseul. The park must have been magnificent; near the lake is a pagoda, which the Duke had caused to be constructed in memory of the friends who had visited him in his exile.

As all the names inscribed were those of nobles, the Revolution, with its great broom, had swept them away, notwithstanding that they were engraved on marble.

The air in this lovely place was so wonderful that it made me feel another creature. To tell the truth, I am gifted on this point with an instinct which is quite curious: I taste the air as gluttons would taste good food, and I believe my health depends on my susceptibility for breathing what is pure as much as I possibly can.

This instinct of which I speak would not permit me to sojourn at Tours for any time. This town is very pretty, but a smell of drains pursued me in every street. My inn, which was the best, possessed it also, in spite of the vinegar and odorous herbs I used to disperse it, so that I could not remain there longer than two days; however, I had time to visit the Cathedral, Academy, and several ruined châteaux. Then I crossed the Loire in a boat to go and weep over

the remains of the old monastery of Marmoutier.

I was taken to these ruins by the director of the Academy at Tours. Soon after my arrival I had paid him a visit; he presented to me all his young pupils, and was kind enough to act as cicerone to me, a great help, seeing he had lived in the town for thirty-five years and knew the environs by heart.

A gang of wood-cutters were pulling down and destroying the remains of the Monastery; whilst I was there, some Dutch merchants had wished to buy this place and convert it into a manufactory. They offered 300,000 francs, which was refused, and afterwards the wood-cutters got it for 20,000 on the condition that this splendid edifice should be pulled down! Vandals could have done no worse! Well! everywhere on my way I heard of the same sort of destruction.

Under the gateway of the second entrance to Marmoutier I sketched a tower; it is

beneath this tower that the Seven Sleepers are buried in a chapel near the large abbey church, where their tombs are hewn out of the rock. Tradition says that the seven sleepers were seven disciples of St. Martin, who having renounced the world with him, lived in a most saintly manner under his leadership, and died in the monastery without being attacked with any illness, all seven on the same day. Their death was reported to be so calm, and their faces were so little altered that they might have been thought to be sleeping, from which cause they derived their name of "the Seven Sleepers." They are still honoured as Saints at Marmoutier, and their fête is publicly held in that town.

To reach Bordeaux I passed through Poitiers and Angoulême. These towns are picturesquely situated on the summit of a hill; from Paris to Bordeaux the carriage road is excellent, so that I traversed it in great comfort. On arriving at Bordeaux I put up at the best hotel, Fumel's, it was admirably situated, facing the port, which

is large enough to contain thousands of vessels. I cannot describe my delight at the magnificent spectacle spread out before my eyes whenever I approached my window; it was like a beautiful dream. So many ships, brigs and boats continually passing to and fro, whilst the larger vessels remained motionless; silence reigned over this immense expanse of water, everything seemed like fairy-land. Although I spent nearly a week at Bordeaux and enjoyed this spectacle night and day, I never tired. By moonlight it was particularly beautiful, a few little lights then appeared on the hill-sides, and it was illuminated as if by magic.

It is true that if I can say a good deal for the beauty of this town, I know little or nothing of its inhabitants; for with the exception of the Prefect, the Comte de Tournon, who was fond of drawing and very kind to me, I made no other acquaintances. I did not renounce my habit of visiting the town and environs; I saw the cemetery, whose sepulchral regularity pleased

me immensely, and which on that account I prefer to any I have seen—Père-la-Chaise alone excepted. I also visited the synagogue, built after the model of Solomon's Temple. It is a most interesting building, and so mysterious that it seems to invite one to pray. The remains of Gallien's Circus are very imposing; only a few walls are now left, but one can still admire some fragments of Roman antiquities, such as the low wall, and an amphitheatre of two hundred and seven feet long and one hundred and forty wide.

I felt very glad afterwards to have undertaken this long journey, all the more so because thanks to my fondness for ruins I brought back with me a portfolio full of drawings done on the spot. If I perceived on my way an old tower, as soon as I reached my inn I hastened to get near it; often whilst I was drawing, some of the inhabitants of the environs would gather round me. One day, whilst I was lamenting over so much destruction with some of these folks, one of them said:

"I see that Madame la Comtesse had some châteaux near here."

"No," I replied, "my châteaux are all in Spain."

The title of Countess, which always greeted me, did not surprise me at all, I was accustomed to see myself treated as a great lady; in all the inns I had titles lavished upon me, but I owed this honour to my carriage, which was fashionable, so I did not become proud, I only had to pay a little more in consequence. My health benefited by the change, and I returned to Paris in a more cheerful frame of mind.

This little journey was the last I made up to the time I write this. I took up again with my usual habits and painting, which of all my distractions is the one I like best. Although I have had the misfortune to lose so many who were dear to me, I am not left quite alone. I have already spoken of Madame Rivière, my niece, who by her tender care is the joy of my life. I must also mention my other niece, Eugénie Le Brun, now Madame J. Tripier Le Franc.

Her studies prevented my seeing her at first as much as I would have liked, for she gave great promise from her earliest youth to become a good painter, much to my delight. I took pleasure in guiding and advising her and following her progress. I am now fully recompensed, for she has realised all my hopes, by her charming character and great talent for painting. She has followed in my footsteps, by adopting portrait painting, in which she is very successful, owing to her eye for colour, truthfulness, and knack of making a perfect likeness. Young still, she can yet add to a reputation which her timidity and modesty caused her to think as barely possible to obtain. Madame Tripier Le Franc and Madame de Rivière are become my children, their care and devotion throw a charm over my existence, and it is near these two beloved creatures and the friends who are still left to me, that I hope to end peacefully a wandering but quiet life, laborious certainly, but honourable.

POSTSCRIPTUM.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE old age of Madame Vigée Le Brun passed away very peacefully, in the midst of the comfortable fortune she had so nobly acquired, and the affectionate care of her niece, Madame J. Tripier Le Franc. She preserved those of her former friends who were spared by death, and made some new ones. In her *salon* the most distinguished members of all classes of Parisian society were wont to assemble: men of the world, artists, and literary characters, were all glad to assemble

in a house free from the passions and intrigues of the day, and enlivened by cheerful intercourse. In the winter she inhabited Paris; in the summer the country-house she possessed at Louveciennes, where the memories of her youth seemed to awaken in the presence of the lovely scenery by which she was surrounded.

Madame Vigée Le Brun was born at Paris, rue Coquillière on the 16th of April, 1755, she died in that city, in the Rue St. Lazare on the 29th of May, 1842. Her remains are interred in the cemetery at Louveciennes.

During the life of Madame Vigée Le Brun, no public establishment in France possessed any of her works; which is all the more surprising because, as a portrait painter, this artist has had no rival before or since. After her death, Madame and M. Tripier le Franc, incited by a generous and filial sentiment, presented to the Louvre Museum two of the pictures which became their heritage on their Aunt's death. These two paintings are: "A Portrait of Madame

Vigée Le Brun 'with her daughter in her arms :" the other ; " A portrait of a young girl with a muff." It is enough to look once only at these works to feel convinced that the praise we have given to Madame Le Brun is in no way exaggerated. These portraits are full of life and sentiment ; they are masterpieces of delicacy and expression, and are of such perfect workmanship that they have preserved all the freshness they had on leaving the artist's studio ; and yet their execution dates back to the end of the last century. In all, Madame Le Brun painted a total of six hundred and sixty portraits, fifteen pictures, and nearly two hundred landscapes in Switzerland and in England.

THE END.

LONDON :
Printed by A. Schulze, 13, Poland Street. (D. & Co.)

00024388

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018